

The Unwelcome Bridle

**Peter Martyr Vermigli, the Doctrine of the Church,
and the English Reformation**

Peter Michael Ackroyd

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Edinburgh

2002



Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgments	iii-iv
Declaration	v
Abbreviations	vi-ix
1 The Neglected Refugee	1
2 The Nature of the Church	18
3 Church Order	69
4 Christian Discipline	109
5 'To found a church'	163
6 The Book of the Law	212
7 The Unwelcome Bridle	262
Bibliography	272

Abstract

The thesis explores the doctrine of the church in the works of Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499-1562). It focuses in particular on his understanding of discipline, the third mark of the church, and compares his thought with the ecclesiology of the programme of reform in England under Edward VI, which he served as one of Thomas Cranmer's continental-guest scholars.

The thesis has a two-fold focus. It first draws on Martyr's writings in order to elucidate his doctrine, then analyses the reform of the English church in 1547-53 in its light. Following an historical and bibliographical introduction, Chapter Two identifies the main contours of Martyr's ecclesiology, which is rooted in his doctrine of union with Christ and controlled by his conception of the church as Christ's body. A distinctive articulation of three 'marks' is highlighted. Comparison with other writers reveals Martyr's doctrine to be most similar to the thought of Bucer and Calvin. Chapter Three addresses church government, including the magistrate's responsibility for church order. Recognising a plurality of church offices, Martyr assumes episcopal rule, but is unusual in reserving authority over key decisions to the people. The fourth chapter opens with a survey of medieval and Reformation approaches to church discipline. For Martyr, this was not simply a ministerial function but the responsibility of every believer: brotherly admonition is as important as excommunication in maintaining the church's obedience and health. The affinities of this approach lie with Oecolampadius and Bucer, but the congregational emphasis is distinctively Martyr's own.

Turning to England, Chapter Five considers Martyr's assessment of the Edwardian reform programme, and analyses the ecclesiological implications of liturgical and doctrinal change, and of the regime's response to challenges to its authority. Despite Cranmer's reliance on Martyr's counsel, the shape of the settlement, not least in the relationship of church and state, is shown to be significantly different from his ecclesiology. This conclusion is confirmed by an examination of Martyr's active role in the preparation of a new code of canon law, the *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*, the subject of Chapter Six. Scrutiny of representative sections of this document, including its disciplinary sections, confirms its ecclesiological conservatism. Though his hand is discernible in some of its disciplinary provisions, the doctrine it expresses is different from Martyr's. Chapter Seven draws together the two parts of the thesis, concluding with observations on the potential of Martyr's thought for contemporary conceptions of church discipline.

Acknowledgments

It is a happy task to record my gratitude to the many individuals and institutions without whose support this enterprise would have foundered long ago. A handful have been especially significant. It was Professor Philip McNair who led me to the central figure of this study, presenting me with a copy of his delightful biography of Peter Martyr when my fiancée introduced us, and taking an avuncular and perceptive interest ever since. I owe to the staff of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, especially the Revd. Dr. David Wenham, the encouragement to persevere with scholarly study alongside parochial ministry. The fertile ground of New College, Edinburgh, was providential soil for this seed to acquire roots. I am particularly grateful to my supervisors, Professor David Wright and Dr. Jane Dawson, for the suggestion of embarking on a doctoral thesis, for their patience when pastoral priorities eclipsed academic enquiry, and for their meticulous scrutiny and generous counsel as study finally yielded fruit.

The preliminary stages of research were undertaken alongside parish responsibilities at St. James' Church, Denton Holme, Carlisle, and work for The Proclamation Trust in London. Without the supportive interest of the Revd. Canon James Rushton and the Revd. John Libby, successive incumbents of St. James, the Right Revd. Ian Harland, former Bishop of Carlisle, and the trustees of The Proclamation Trust, the tender shoots of scholarship would soon have withered. I am particularly indebted to the Revd. Preb. Dick Lucas, chairman of the trust, for his many encouragements and characteristically penetrating insights. I have also enjoyed the understanding support of the elders and members of Emmanuel Dundonald Church, Wimbledon; the friendship of the Revd. Richard Coekin has both spurred me on and reminded me of the proper place of scholarship in the life of the local church.

I am grateful to the numerous bodies which have provided the material wherewithal for study. Grants from the Diocese of Carlisle and the Faculty of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh primed the pump in the early years. I am indebted to the Arts and Humanities Research Board, the Whitefield Institute, The Great St Helen's Trust, The Family Trust, the Andrew Anderson Trust and The Cross Trust, as well as to a number of individuals, for enabling the thesis to be completed on a full-time basis. The inestimable advantage of peaceful study space was generously provided by Mark and Mands Vernon in their uncluttered Raynes Park home. My visits to Edinburgh were made particularly fruitful and enjoyable by the warm hospitality of Donald and Bridie

Graham, as well as by the fellowship, facilities and staff of Rutherford House, especially the Revd. David Searle and Edna Morrow. Many other friends have lent practical and moral support; Alex and Lucy Pease and Tim and Lorraine Clissold have in different ways been very significant partners.

The kind help of a number of libraries has been indispensable. It is a pleasure to pay tribute to the staff of the British Library, and particularly to the unobtrusive professionalism of those who serve the readers of the Rare Books and Music Room. The resources of New College Library, Edinburgh, perhaps the foremost theological collection in Britain, have often made research a sheer pleasure. I also acknowledge my debt to the staffs of Dr William's Library, the Parker Library at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, Lambeth Palace Library, and Carlisle Cathedral Library, all invaluable sources of sixteenth-century material; I am particularly grateful to the Revd. Canon Dr. David Weston for enabling generous access to the largely unexplored treasures of the latter. I have also appreciated the help of the Bodleian Library, Cambridge University Library, the libraries of the Warburg Institute, the Institute of Historical Research, and King's College, London, and the Società di Studi Valdesi, Torre Pellice.

Among those scholars whose personal advice and knowledge of Peter Martyr's world I have valued are the Revd. Dr. Peter Adam, Laura-Grace Alexander, the Revd. Dr Roger Beckwith, the Revd. Professor Gerald Bray, Dr. Emidio Campi, the Revd. John Jackson, Professor Frank James, the Most Revd. Dr Peter Jensen, the Revd. Professor Alister McGrath, and the Revd. Dr. Graham Tomlin. At different times and in many ways they have all been generous with their time and counsel.

Finally, this thesis would have been neither commenced nor completed without the unstinting support of my family. Though my father has not lived to see the result, his memory has been an inspiration throughout, and I owe to him and my mother the ability both to contemplate a demanding project and to maintain sanity in completing it. Lucy, Alastair and Tom have all arrived in this world during the gestation of the thesis, bringing more labour, stimulation, distraction and joy than even doctoral research. Yet my greatest debt of thanks is due to their mother and my wife, JoJo, on whose invigorating and unqualified support, questions, encouragement and friendship I have depended more than she knows, and to whom this work, as we complete ten delightful years of marriage, is gratefully dedicated.

Peter Ackroyd

June 2002

Declaration

I, Peter Michael Ackroyd, declare:

- (a) that this thesis has been composed by me;
- (b) that the work is my own; and
- (c) that the work has not been submitted for any other professional degree or qualification.

22nd October 2002

Abbreviations and Conventions

Works of Peter Martyr Vermigli

Sixteenth-century editions

<i>Cor</i>	<i>In selectissimam D. Pauli Priorem ad Corinthios epistolam Commentarii</i> , 3rd edn. (Zurich: C. Froschauer, 1572 [1st edn. 1551]).
<i>CP</i>	<i>The Common Places of the most famous and renowned Divine Doctor Peter Martyr, divided into foure principalle parts</i> , tr. Anthonie Marten (London: H. Denham and H. Middleton, 1583).
<i>Def</i>	<i>Defensio doctrinae veteris et apostolicae de sacrosancto eucharistiae sacramento</i> (Zürich: Froschauer, 1559)
<i>De Votis</i>	<i>Defensio . . . ad Riccardi Smythaei . . . duos libellos de Caelibatu sacerdotum & Votis monasticis</i> , (Basel: Perna, 1559)
<i>Gen</i>	<i>In primum Librum Mosis, qui vulgo Genesis dicitur Commentarii . . .</i> (Zurich: Froschauer, 1569)
<i>Iud</i>	<i>In Librum Iudicum D. Petri Martyris Vermilii Florentini . . . Commentarii doctissimi . . .</i> (Zurich: Froschauer, 1561)
<i>Judges</i>	<i>Most fruitful and learned Commentaries of Doctor Peter Martir Vermil Florentine . . .</i> (London: John Day, 1564)
<i>LC</i>	<i>Loci Communes D Petri Martyris Vermilii . . .</i> 4th edn. (London: Thomas Vautrollerius, 1583 [1st edn. 1576])
<i>Mel</i>	<i>Melachim, id est, Regum Libri Duo posteriores cum Commentariis</i> (Zurich: Froschauer, 1566)
<i>Rom</i>	<i>In Epistolam S. Pauli Apostoli ad Romanos commentarii doctissimi</i> (Basel: Perna, 1570 [1st edn. 1558])
<i>Romans</i>	<i>Most learned and fruitfull Commentaries of D Peter Martir Vermilius . . . upon the epistle of S. Paul to the Romanes</i> (London: Day, 1568)
<i>Sam</i>	<i>In duos Libros Samuelis Prophetae . . .</i> (Zurich: Froschauer, 1564)
<i>USD</i>	<i>Una semplice dichiarazione sopra gli XII articoli della fede christiana</i> (Basel: Johan Hervagius, 1544)

Modern translations

<i>LLE</i>	<i>The Life, Early Letters and Eucharistic Writings of Peter Martyr</i> , ed. Duffield, G.E. and McLelland, J.C. (Abingdon: Sutton Courtenay, 1989)
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- PML *The Peter Martyr Library*, ed. Donnelly, J.P., McLelland, J.C. and James, F.A., *Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies* (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers/Truman State University Press, 1994 -)
- 1 *Early Writings: Creed, Scripture, Church*, ed. McLelland, J.C. with a biographical introduction by McNair, P.M.J. (1994).
 - 2 *Dialogue on the Two Natures in Christ*, ed. Donnelly, J.P. (1995)
 - 3 *Sacred Prayers: Drawn from the Psalms of David*, ed. Donnelly, J.P. (1996)
 - 4 *Philosophical Works: On the Relation of Philosophy to Theology*, ed. McLelland, J.C. (1996)
 - 5 *Life, Letters and Sermons*, ed. Donnelly, J.P. (1999)
 - 7 (sic) *The Oxford Treatise and Disputation: On the Eucharist, 1549*, ed. McLelland, J.C. (2000)
- PMR *The Peter Martyr Reader*, ed. Donnelly, J.P., James, F.A. and McLelland, J.C. (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 1999)

Other sources

- ANCL *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, ed. Roberts, A. (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1867-97)
- APC *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, ed. Dasent, J.R., 32 vols (London: Stationery Office, 1890-1907)
- ARG *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*
- BL British Library
- BDS Martin Bucer, *Martini Bucer Opera Omnia*, series I: *Deutsche Schriften*, ed. Stupperich, R., et al. (Gütersloh and Paris, 1960-)
- CCCC Parker Library, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge
- CH *Church History*
- CHMPT *Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c.350 - c 1450*, ed. Burns, J.H. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988)
- CR *Corpus Reformatorum*, ed. Bretschneider, C.G., et al. (Halle, 1834 -)
- CSEL *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (Vienna, 1866 -)
- DER *Documents of the English Reformation*, ed. Bray, G. (Cambridge: James

- Clarke, 1994)
- Ecc Mem* John Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials Relating chiefly to Religion*, 3 vols (London: John Wyat 1721)
- ET* *Epistolae Tigurinae de Rebus Potissimum ad Ecclesiae Anglicanae Reformationem Pertinentibus Conscriptae* (Cambridge: Parker Society, 1848)
- Gorham* *Gleanings of a Few Scattered Ears, during the Period of the Reformation in England . . .*, ed. Gorham, G.C. (London: Bell & Daldy, 1857)
- HC* *Henrician Canons*, 1535, in TCR
- Inst* John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. McNeill, J.T., LCC 20, 21 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960)
- JEH* *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
- LCC* *Library of Christian Classics*, eds. Baillie, J. *et al.*, 26 vols (London and Philadelphia: SCM, 1953-70)
- LW* *Luther's Works*, eds. Pelikan, J.J. and Lehman, W. (Philadelphia and St Louis: Concordia, 1955 -)
- NPNF* *Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, (New York, 1886-1900)
- OL* *Original Letters relative to the English Reformation*, ed. Robinson, H., 2 vols (Cambridge: Parker Society, 1846-7)
- PG* *Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Graeca*, ed. Migne, J.P. (Paris, 1857-66)
- PL* *Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina*, ed. Migne, J.P. (Paris, 1844-64)
- PS* Parker Society
- R* *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*, in TCR
- R & F* *Corpus iuris canonici*, eds. Richter, E.L. and Friedberg, E., 2 vols (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1879-81)
- SBET* *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology*
- SCH* *Studies in Church History*
- SCJ* *Sixteenth Century Journal*
- SJT* *Scottish Journal of Theology*
- R* *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*, 1571, in TCR
- RSTC* Pollard, A.W. and Redgrave, G.R., *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad 1475-1640*, rev. Jackson, W.A., Ferguson, F.S. and Pantzer, K.F., 3 vols (Oxford, 1976-91)

- TCR *Tudor Church Reform: The Henrician Canons of 1535 and the Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*, ed. Bray, G., Church of England Record Society 8 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000)
- TAC *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947*, ed. Bray, G., Church of England Record Society 6 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998)
- WA *D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Weimar: Herman Böhlau), 1883-1983)
- ZL *The Zurich Letters*, ed. Robinson, H., First Series (Cambridge: Parker Society, 1852)

Conventions

References to the *Loci Communes* are made by book, chapter and section, which are generally consistent among all editions from 1583. For reasons of consistency, the same approach is adopted for citations from the English translation, the *Common Places*. Where material is cited from the *LC* or *CP* appendices, the page reference is to the 1583 editions.

Where a modern English translation of a sixteenth-century work is available, I have normally quoted from this. Other English translations are either my own, or derived from sixteenth-century editions, occasionally amended.

Biblical quotations are from the *Revised Standard Version*.

Chapter One

The Neglected Refugee

Moreover, as regards daily living, they have relaxed the bridle of discipline . . .

Peter Martyr, 1562¹

We would be sons, and heirs also, but we tremble at the rod.

Richard Cox to Henry Bullinger, 5 Oct 1552²

Peter Martyr Vermigli: Rehabilitated Reformer

On 12 November 1562 in his house on the Neugasse in Zürich, with his pregnant wife, Catherine, beside him, and attended by Henry Bullinger and other friends, Peter Martyr Vermigli died. He was sixty-three years of age. A biblical scholar of recognised authority across Europe, since 1556 he had occupied the chair of Hebrew in the *Schola Tigurina*. His posthumous influence over the Reformed churches on both sides of the Atlantic was to be considerable. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries' pastor's library, his *Loci Communes* stood alongside Bullinger's *Decades* and Calvin's *Institutes*. With his biblical commentaries and works on the eucharist they qualify him as one of the architects of the Reformed tradition. Among both contemporaries and successors, his reputation as a scholar and teacher of the Reformed faith had few peers.³

Yet until recently Martyr, as he was normally known, claimed little more than a footnote in the history books. By comparison with John Calvin, Henry Bullinger, or even

¹ Martyr, scholion *An evangelici sint Schismatici, quod se alienaverint a Papistis . . . de schismate*, in *Mel*, 103^r: Praeterea, quoad mores et vitam, usque adeo disciplinae frena relaxarunt, ut bonum dicant malum, et quod est malum praedicant esse bonum. *LC* IV.6.5.

² *OL* I, 123; *ET*, 80.

³ Martyr's death is recounted in J. Simler, *Oratio de vita et obitu viri optimi, praestantissimi Theologi Petri Martyris Vermiglii, Sacrarum literarum in schola Tigurina Professoris* (Zurich: Froschauer, 1563) printed without pagination at the beginning of *LC*. Emidio Campi, 'Vermigli's place in Reformed Theology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', forthcoming paper given at a 1999 symposium on the 500th anniversary of Martyr's birth held at Kappel-am-Albis near Zürich, provides an introduction to the reception of Martyr's work among Swiss, German and Dutch Reformed writers and historians. Most papers given at this event are now published in *Peter Martyr Vermigli: Humanism, Republicanism, Reformation*, ed. E. Campi, (Geneva: Droz, 2002)

his close friend and colleague Martin Bucer, his contribution to the shaping of Reformed Christianity has been conspicuously overlooked. This is not surprising. Even by the turbulent standards of Martyr's day, the earthly life that closed in the Neugasse had been unusual. The vicissitudes of the Reformation saw him as the acclaimed pioneer of no enduring city or state reformation, rather casting him as a virtually permanent refugee scholar. Further, though his thought resists unequivocal identification with that of his peers, no major head of Reformed doctrine looks to him as its principal exponent. His theology defies over-simple categorisation, but few of its elements are strikingly original. Moreover, his renown waned as that of others waxed. The hegemony of Geneva gradually eclipsed the pluralism of the tradition's formative era, making some aspects of Martyr's thought less congenial. In Scotland, for example, his sympathy for episcopacy and association with the Edwardian reform of the English church was sufficient to curtail the appeal of his works.⁴ It has accordingly been relatively costless for historians and theologians to ignore Peter Martyr.

Nevertheless, biographical outlines of his life are now readily available.⁵ Born into an artisan family in Florence in 1499, Piero Mariano Vermigli entered the Lateran Congregation of the Augustinian Canons Regular in 1514, on his profession taking the name Peter Martyr from the thirteenth-century Dominican inquisitor. His erudition took him to the university in Padua and he subsequently rose rapidly in the service of his order, gaining a reputation as preacher, vigorous reformer of morals and able administrator. While serving as Abbot of the prestigious house of San Pietro ad Aram in Naples in 1537-40, contact with the Spanish Erasmian Juan de Valdés, together with his own reading of the reformers, precipitated conversion to Protestant convictions. In his next convent, San Frediano in Lucca, he quickly inaugurated a determined programme of education which made it, in the words of one biographer, 'the first and last reformed theological college in pre-Tridentine Italy'.⁶ But, following the failure of Regensburg, the reconstitution of the Inquisition put the writing on the wall for heterodoxy in cities like Lucca. In August 1542, abruptly resigning his office and renouncing his vows, Martyr fled, seeking safety and freedom to preach evangelical truth north of the Alps. Arriving in Zürich, and soon moving to Basel and Strasbourg in

⁴ Bruce Gordon, 'Peter Martyr Vermigli in Scotland: A Sixteenth-Century Reformer in a Seventeenth-Century Quarrel', in Campi, ed. (2002), 275-93.

⁵ Apart from standard encyclopaedia references, the most accessible brief account of his whole career is: P.M.J. McNair, 'Biographical Introduction' in *PML* 1: 3-14. Unacknowledged details in the following biographical sketch are from this source.

⁶ P.M.J. McNair, *Peter Martyr in Italy: An Anatomy of Apostasy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), 221.

search of a teaching role, Martyr's theological mettle was quickly recognised. For five years he lectured on the Old Testament in Strasbourg's Gymnasium, becoming a close confidant of Martin Bucer. He married a former nun, Catherine Dammartin, but published little. In 1547, as the imperial storm clouds which would culminate in the Augsburg Interim built up over Strasbourg, its Senate gave Martyr leave to accept Thomas Cranmer's invitation to England. Here, the accession of Edward VI had created a new opportunity for proponents of reform. Martyr's appointment as Regius Professor of Divinity in Oxford was to be paralleled by Bucer's arrival in Cambridge in 1549, and his counsel was also frequently required at Lambeth. His Oxford lectures on I Corinthians and Romans gave rise to published commentaries and generated controversy: his exposition of I Corinthians 10 and 11 precipitated the May 1549 Oxford Disputation on the eucharist. The published account of this event and Martyr's own treatise cemented his theological reputation in England and beyond. Conservative Oxford, already scandalised by the Vermigli's breach of their vows of chastity, was less impressed.

The reversal of religion following the death of Edward VI saw Martyr, now a widower, take refuge again in Strasbourg. However, though the Interim's constraints had abated, Lutheran sacramentalism was in the ascendant. Martyr eventually found the city's theological air unwelcome, despite the opportunities it afforded to support England's Protestant diaspora.⁷ In 1556 he moved to Zürich, succeeding to Conrad Pellican's chair of Hebrew. Here he resumed his publishing career, completing substantial works against Stephen Gardiner on the eucharist, Richard Smith on monastic vows, and Johannes Brenz on the ubiquity of Christ's human nature, as well as a commentary on Judges. Lectures on Samuel, Kings, Genesis and Lamentations were published posthumously.⁸

Zürich proved congenial to Martyr, long a correspondent of Bullinger. The two now became close associates. Domestic felicity accompanied theological tranquillity as Martyr married an Italian from Geneva, Catherine Merenda. Declining invitations to return to England or to take up appointments in Heidelberg and Geneva, Martyr's last public venture was to accompany Theodore Beza to the Colloquy of Poissy in 1561. Hearing the reformers' eucharistic beliefs explained in her native tongue by a fellow

⁷ C.H. Garrett, *The Marian Exiles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), remains the most comprehensive survey of these refugees, but Andrew Pettegree's *Marian Protestantism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1996) adds substantially to our understanding of their activities and influence.

⁸ See the bibliography for a listing of Martyr's major works.

Florentine was not, however, sufficient to persuade Catherine of Medici. But Martyr did have the consolation of seeing another compatriot, the Bishop of Troyes, Antonio Caracciolo, convert unmistakably to Protestantism.⁹

Despite the esteem in which he was held in his day, scholarly interest in Martyr's career and works is relatively recent. After a burst of hagiographical reminiscence following his death, over two centuries elapsed before his life stimulated further publications. Only in the last fifty years has there been a sustained revival of research, generating a number of valuable monographs, and spawning a project to translate his works into English. With so recent a *démarche*, the results of this scholarship are, as yet, far from comprehensive. Moreover, a critical edition of his works is still awaited.

Martyr's first biographer was his Zürich friend, Josiah Simler, whose 1563 *Vita* was an expanded version of his funeral oration. It was reproduced in the *Genesis* commentary in 1569 and printed in most editions of the *Loci Communes* from 1582, including the 1583 English translation.¹⁰ Simler's account is still the principal source of biographical information for Martyr's life, especially for his years in Italy, and appears to derive from conversation either with Martyr himself or his longstanding *famulus*, Giulio Santerenziano.¹¹ It remained the basis of most treatments of Martyr's life until the twentieth century. Theodore Beza and Bullinger drew upon it for their accounts of Martyr in the *Icones* and the unpublished *Stiftsgeschichte*, and were followed by historians of the Reformed churches in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹² Friedrich Schlosser depended heavily on Simler in his 1809 biographical portrait, as did Young in her description of Martyr's life included in the 1860 *Life and Times of Aonio Paleario*.¹³ In the most comprehensive biography of the nineteenth century, Charles

⁹ In both 1555 and 1557, Calvin urged Martyr to accept pastoral responsibility in Geneva's Italian congregation, on the second occasion suggesting that he would hand over some of his own teaching to Martyr; CR 44: 403-4; *Letters of John Calvin*, ed. Jules Bonnet, (1858; repr. New York: Lenox Hill, 1972), III, 121-6, 313-4, 353-4.

¹⁰ Simler, *Oratio*. The most recent English translation is in *PML* 5: 9-62.

¹¹ McNair (1967), xv-xviii; on Santerenziano himself, see P. Boesch, 'Julius Terentianus: Factotum des Petrus Martyr und Korrektor der Offizin Froschauer', *Zwingliana* 8 (1948), 587-601.

¹² Théodore Beza, *Icones, id est Verae Imagines Virorum Doctrina Simul et Pietate Illustrum* (Geneva: Ioannem Laonium, 1580), P.ii^r-P.iii^r; on references to Martyr in the historiography of the later Reformed tradition, Campi (2002).

¹³ F.C. Schlosser, *Leben des Theodore de Beza und des Peter Martyr Vermigli* (Heidelberg: Mohr und Zimmer, 1809); M. Young, *Life and Times of Aonio Paleario, or the History of the Italian Reformers in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1860), I, 397-493.

Schmidt relies on Simler for details of Martyr's years in Italy.¹⁴

Current Martyr studies stem from a revival in the mid-twentieth century. In a Canadian thesis of 1949, Mariano di Gangi examined the whole of Martyr's career, summarising him as an 'Italian Calvinist'. This treatment was published in updated form in 1993 for a popular readership, but does not engage with more recent studies.¹⁵ The work of another Canadian scholar is more substantial: Joseph McLelland's book on Martyr's sacramental theology, *The Visible Words of God*.¹⁶ Originating in an Edinburgh doctoral thesis completed under the supervision of T.F. Torrance, McLelland's interest lay in Reformed epistemology. His work relates the doctrine of the sacraments to Martyr's theology as a systematic whole, and particularly to the nature of revelation. It remains the foremost introduction to Martyr as a theologian, though its biographical introduction is less reliable.

Recovery of interest in Martyr's involvement with the Reformation in England was signalled by Gordon Huelin in 1955.¹⁷ Still the most thorough account of the scope and significance of Martyr's engagement with England, Huelin's thesis covers his time as the distinguished guest of the Edwardian regime as well as subsequent involvement with the Marian exiles and the settlement under Elizabeth. In a work which assiduously mines Martyr's correspondence, Huelin's interest is primarily historical. He does not essay a comprehensive assessment of Martyr's theology or published works. Moreover, his treatment of some aspects of Martyr's sojourn in England, notably his involvement in the reform of church law, is disproportionately brief, though he sheds considerable light on his influence with the Marian exiles in Frankfurt, Strasbourg and Zürich. Despite this, Martyr's activity and influence in the British Isles has continued to receive

¹⁴ C. Schmidt, *Vie de Pierre Martyr Vermigli* (Strasbourg, 1834); *idem*, *Peter Martyr Vermigli: Leben und ausgewählte Schriften* (Elberfeld: R.L. Friedrichs, 1858).

¹⁵ Mariano Di Gangi, 'Pietro Martire Vermigli 1500-1562: an Italian Calvinist', (BD thesis, Presbyterian College, Montreal, 1949); *idem*, *Peter Martyr Vermigli, 1499-1562: Renaissance Man, Reformation Master* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1993).

¹⁶ J.C. McLelland, *The Visible Words of God: An Exposition of the Sacramental Theology of Peter Martyr Vermigli, AD 1500-1562* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1957). McLelland's further work on Martyr includes: 'The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination According to Peter Martyr', *SJT* 8 (1955), 257-65; 'Calvinism Perfecting Thomism? Peter Martyr's Question', *SJT* 31 (1978), 571-8; 'Peter Martyr Vermigli: Scholastic or Humanist?', in *Peter Martyr Vermigli and Italian Reform*, ed. J.C. McLelland (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1980), 141-51; 'From Montreal to Zurich (1949-1999): Vermigli Studies Today', in Campi, ed. (2002), 9-16.

¹⁷ Gordon Huelin, 'Peter Martyr and the English Reformation' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1955).

only limited attention.¹⁸ No major analyses have been published, though Charles Smyth included a biographical chapter in his 1926 account of the English Reformation, and Martyr's role has also attracted occasional comment in more recent works.¹⁹ In particular, Diarmaid MacCulloch's work on Cranmer and the Reformation under Edward VI has emphasised the close involvement of Bucer and Martyr, highlighting the need for further research.²⁰

The most substantial biographical work to date remains Philip McNair's 1967 account of Martyr's first forty-three years, prior to his flight over the Alps.²¹ It is a thorough work of meticulous reconstruction, tracing the Aristotelian, Augustinian and humanist influences in his training, the successive stages of his rise in the Lateran Congregation, his contact with reforming circles especially those associated with Juan de Valdés in Naples, and his revolutionary ministry in Lucca. McNair's description of the movement for reform in Italy known as 'Evangelism', with which he associates Martyr, would now be qualified in the light of subsequent research. However, the biography is sure-footed, and highlights the continued lack of a similarly comprehensive account of the more productive, and much better documented, last twenty years of his subject's life.

Briefer treatments of aspects of Martyr's career have appeared as articles and chapters in other works. Most draw on the more substantial published works for their accounts.²² Several examine particular aspects of his career or incidents.²³

¹⁸ The disputation itself is the subject of Andreas Löwe's unpublished 1997 Oxford M.Phil. thesis, 'Peter Martyr Vermigli, Disputatio de Eucharistiae Sacramento . . . 1549'.

¹⁹ Charles Smyth, *Cranmer and the Reformation under Edward VI* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926), 107-138; McNair (1980); Overell (1984); Anderson (1988).

²⁰ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer* (New Haven: Yale, 1996), esp 380-3, 407-9, 470, 500-4, 533-5; *idem*, *Tudor Church Militant* (London: Allen Lane, 1999), esp 77-80, 87-93, ; *idem*, 'Peter Martyr and Archbishop Cranmer', in E. Campi, ed. (2002), 173-201.

²¹ McNair (1967); the Italian edition is *Pietro Martire in Italia: un'anatomia di un'apostasia* (Naples, 1971).

²² David Steinmetz, *Reformers in the Wings* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 151-61, focussing on Martyr's eucharistic theology; McNair (1994); P.M.J. McNair, 'Peter Martyr in England', in J.C. McLelland, ed. (1980), 85-105, dealing principally with his work in Oxford; Emidio Campi, 'Petrus Martyr Vermigli (1499-1562): Europäische Wirkungsfelder eines italienischen Reformators', *Zwingliana* 27 (2000), 29-46.

²³ B.F. Paist, 'Peter Martyr and the Colloquy of Poissy', *Princeton Theological Review* 20 (1922), 212-31, 418-47, 616-46; M.A. Overell, 'Peter Martyr in England, 1547-1553: An Alternative View', *SCJ* 15 (1984), 87-104; M.W. Anderson, 'Rhetoric and Reality: Peter Martyr and the English Reformation', *SCJ* 19 (1988), 451-69, responds to Overell's view that Martyr's ministry in England is best viewed as a failure.

Following McLelland, Martyr's theology began to attract attention, and during the 1970s this bore published fruit. His thought during his first Strasbourg period was the subject of Klaus Sturm's 1971 study, *Die Theologie Peter Martyr Vermigli während seines ersten Aufenthalts in Strassburg 1542-1547: Ein Reformkatholik unter den Vätern der reformierten Kirche*.²⁴ Sturm argues that Martyr's thought in this period was in transition: he is best described as a 'Reform-Catholic' than a Protestant theologian. This work was followed in 1975 by Marvin Anderson's ambitious examination of Martyr's career as an exegete.²⁵ Preceded by an extensive biographical section, Anderson proceeds chronologically, examining each of Martyr's works and suggesting connections with his setting and the views of other writers. He places Martyr's work firmly in its contemporary context, though as an exposition of his thought the volume's worth is constrained by a rather discursive presentation. In a more focussed work, Salvatore Corda's monograph, *Veritas Sacramenti*, took as its subject Martyr's eucharistic theology. Drawing particularly on Martyr's 1559 work against Stephen Gardiner, Corda attends more closely than had McLelland to the detailed content of his sacramental thought. The nature of sacrament as a relationship between two entities, the connection between the external eating of the sacrament and the spiritual feeding on Christ, and the benefits this brings the believer, form the structure of his exposition. Corda concludes that Martyr's doctrine has a marked affinity with Calvin's but is also closely related to that of both Bullinger and Bucer, and even has points of contact with Melancthon's thought.²⁶

In 1976, Patrick Donnelly published *Calvinism and Scholasticism in Vermigli's Doctrine of*

²⁴ Klaus Sturm, *Die Theologie Peter Martyr Vermigli während seines ersten Aufenthalts in Strassburg 1542-1547: Ein Reformkatholik unter den Vätern der reformierten Kirche* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1971).

²⁵ M.W. Anderson, *Peter Martyr, A Reformer in Exile (1542-1562): A chronology of biblical writings in England and Europe* (Nieuwkoop: B de Graaf, 1975). Anderson's other writings on Martyr include: 'Word and Spirit in Exile (1542-1562): The Biblical Writings of Peter Martyr Vermigli', *JEH* 21 (1970), 193-201; 'Peter Martyr on Romans', *SJT* 26 (1973), 401-20; 'Peter Martyr, Reformed Theologian (1542-1562): His Letters to Bullinger and Calvin', *SCJ* 4 (1973), 41-64; 'Pietro Martire Vermigli on the Scope and Clarity of Scripture', *Theologische Zeitschrift* 30 (1974), 86-94; 'Royal Idolatry: Peter Martyr and the Reformed Tradition', *ARG* 69 (1978), 157-201; 'Peter Martyr Vermigli: Protestant Humanist', in McLelland, ed. (1980), 65-84; 'Vista Tigurina: Peter Martyr Vermigli and European Reform (1556-1562)', *Harvard Theological Review* 83 (1990), 181-206; 'Translatio Imperii', unpublished lecture (2002).

²⁶ Salvatore Corda, *Veritas Sacramenti: A Study in Vermigli's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1975). Corda explicitly rejects Sturm's suggestion that Martyr's thought was not Protestant until some time after his arrival in Strasbourg; *ibid*, 20, 190-1.

Man and Grace.²⁷ Donnelly highlights Martyr's dependence on his Aristotelian inheritance, arguing that this was much more significant than previously recognised. Indeed, the Protestant orthodoxy of later generations owed much to Martyr's synthesis of Reformed doctrine with the Thomist approach of his Paduan training. His exegetical methods, philosophical view of man and thought on predestination reflect a commitment to Aristotelianism which exercised a decisive influence over his theology. In 1980, a further dimension of Martyr's activity was highlighted by Robert Kingdon's introduction to his political thought, which presents and introduces a number of key passages in an accessible format.²⁸ Political and ethical issues are a recurring feature of Martyr's works, and await sustained study.

More recently, there has been a gradual accumulation of short studies on Martyr's theology and methodology.²⁹ However, only one full-length work has appeared, an examination of his doctrine of predestination.³⁰ This argues that Martyr's doctrine was fully formed before his flight from Lucca, and that his commitment to *gemina*

²⁷ J. Patrick Donnelly, *Calvinism and Scholasticism in Vermigli's Doctrine of Man and Grace* (Leiden: Brill, 1976). Donnelly has also contributed: 'Calvinist Thomism', *Viator* 7 (1976), 441-55; 'Italian Influence on the Development of Calvinist Scholasticism', *SCJ* 7 (1976), 81-101; 'Three Disputed Vermigli Tracts', in *Essays Presented to Myron P Gilmore*, eds. S. Bertelli and G. Ramakus (Florence: La nuova italia, 1978), I, 37-46; 'The Social and Ethical Thought of Peter Martyr Vermigli', in McLelland, ed. (1980), 107-19; 'Peter Martyr Vermigli's Political Ethics', in Campi, ed. (2002), 59-66.

²⁸ Robert M. Kingdon, *The Political Thought of Peter Martyr Vermigli: Selected Texts and Commentary* (Geneva: Droz, 1980). This work stems from an initial study presented as an appendix to R.M. Kingdon, *Geneva and the Consolidation of the French Protestant Movement, 1564-1572* (Geneva: Droz & Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967). Kingdon's contributions to Vermigli studies also include: 'Peter Martyr Vermigli and the Marks of the True Church', in *Continuity and Discontinuity in Church History: Essays Presented to George Huntston Williams*, eds. F.F. Church and T. George (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 198-214; 'The Political Thought of Peter Martyr Vermigli', in McLelland, ed. (1980), 121-39; 'The Function of the Law in the Political Thought of Peter Martyr Vermigli', in *Reformatio Perennis: Essays on Calvin and the Reformation in Honor of Ford Lewis Battles*, eds. B.A. Gerrish and R. Benedetto (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1981), 159-72; 'Peter Martyr Vermigli on Church Discipline', in Campi, ed. (2002), 67-76.

²⁹ John L. Thompson, 'The Survival of Allegorical Interpretation in Peter Martyr Vermigli's Old Testament Exegesis', in *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation: Essays Presented to David C Steinmetz in Honor of His Sixtieth Birthday*, eds. Robert A. Muller & John L. Thompson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 255-71; W.D. Rankin, 'Carnal Union with Christ in the Theology of T.F. Torrance' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1997), 176-89, A-50 A-75, includes a useful discussion of Martyr's correspondence on this subject with Calvin and Beza.

³⁰ Frank A. James, *Peter Martyr Vermigli and Predestination: The Augustinian Inheritance of an Italian Reformer* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998).

praedestinatio reflects the teaching of the fourteenth century Augustinian Gregory of Rimini rather than the Thomist tradition. The author, Frank James, also suggests that alongside the humanist training identified by McLelland and Anderson, and the Thomist scholastic influence described by Donnelly, the *schola Augustiniana moderna* played an important role in Martyr's intellectual formation.³¹

Debate over the relative significance of humanism and scholasticism in Martyr's formation and theological method dominated the first major conference on his life and work, in Montreal in 1977. The proceedings included papers on this question by McLelland and Anderson, as well as contributions from McNair, Donnelly and Kingdon.³² In 1999, further conferences were held in commemoration of the 500th anniversary of Martyr's birth: in Kappel near Zürich, in Padua and in North America. Most of the Kappel conference papers have now been published.³³ The anniversary was also marked in an inaugural professorial lecture in New College, University of Edinburgh.³⁴

In the past decade, further resources have become available, with the publication of a complete bibliography of his published works, and the commencing of the translation of his *oeuvre* into English. An initial English translation of Simler's *Oratio*, several Martyr letters and the Oxford *Tractatio* on the eucharist was published in 1989.³⁵ The bibliography prepared by Donnelly and Kingdon also includes a useful register of Martyr's extant correspondence.³⁶ McLelland, Donnelly and James are now the general editors of a translation project, *The Peter Martyr Library*, which to date has produced seven volumes, mostly of his shorter works or extracts, together with *The Peter Martyr Reader*, a representative selection of his writings.³⁷ Nevertheless, despite recent

³¹ See also, Frank A. James, 'Peter Martyr Vermigli: At the Crossroads of Late Medieval Scholasticism, Christian Humanism and Resurgent Augustinianism', in *Protestant Scholasticism: Essays in Reassessment*, eds. C.R. Trueman and R.S. Clark (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999), 62-78.

³² McLelland, ed. (1980).

³³ Campi, ed. (2002).

³⁴ David F. Wright, 'Reformed Roots: Peter Martyr Vermigli', 7 Oct 1999, published in *Theology in Scotland* 7 (2000), 21-38

³⁵ *The Life, Letters and Eucharistic Writings of Peter Martyr*, eds. J.C. McLelland and G.E. Duffield (Abingdon: Sutton Courtenay, 1989).

³⁶ *A Bibliography of the Works of Peter Martyr Vermigli*, eds. J. P. Donnelly, and R.M. Kingdon (Kirkville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1990). The register of Martyr's letters, compiled by Anderson, lists their principal locations but is occasionally misleading.

³⁷ See bibliography for a full listing of *The Peter Martyr Library* volumes.

progress, Martyr scholarship is yet young. Most of his works are substantially unexplored, and the relationship of his thought to that of his peers awaits detailed examination. The nature of both his hermeneutical method and his reception of the Fathers calls for further study. Further, his posthumous influence over the shape of the Reformed tradition is still poorly understood.

The present study focusses on Martyr's ecclesiology, and especially his attitude to church discipline. Despite the fact that the *Loci Communes* makes accessible many of his church writings, the church is one area of Martyr's thought which has attracted limited attention. Three short treatments are of significance. The first is a chapter in McLelland's 1957 study, which drew attention to the importance of union with Christ in Martyr's doctrine of the church. This was soon followed by an short article by Luigi Santini which focussed mainly on a 1542 letter to Lucca, notable for its description of episcopal office and the issue of flight from persecution.³⁸ Finally, in 1979 Robert Kingdon identified Martyr's espousal of a 'three-mark' doctrine of the church as both distinctive in its day and influential over the later Reformed tradition.³⁹ The present study is the first extensive examination of his ecclesiology, especially in situating his work in its contemporary context, and attending in particular to Martyr's distinctive conception of the third mark, church discipline. It is the latter which gives rise to the thesis title, 'The Unwelcome Bridle'. We shall see how Martyr's understanding of discipline led him to criticise the late-medieval church's neglect and misuse of the instrument. However, like many contemporaries, he found Protestant regimes reluctant to support its wholehearted reintroduction. As Cox's comment to Bullinger indicates, England was no exception. After outlining Martyr's ecclesiology, the thesis therefore examines the reformation of the church in England during the reign of Edward VI in the light of Martyr's participation in Cranmer's project. Discipline was one of several aspects of Martyr's thought which found only limited expression in the church order put in place during the reign: despite Martyr's advocacy, the ecclesiology which became characteristic of the Reformed churches was not a priority for Cranmer.

The quest for the true church

The theological background to this study is the ecclesiological earthquake triggered by

³⁸ Luigi Santini, 'Appunti sulla ecclesiologia di P.M. Vermigli e la edificazione della Chiesa', *Bollettino della società di studi valdesi* 104 (1958), 69-76.

³⁹ Kingdon (1979).

Luther's soteriological insights. Hendrix has recently observed that the historiographical trend is against seeing the Reformation as a discrete and important period in the history of the church.⁴⁰ But an over-emphasis on its undoubted continuity with the late Middle Ages risks leaving unexplained the magnitude of the changes wrought in church and society in the sixteenth-century in the wake of Luther's protest.⁴¹ The fracturing of the western church demonstrates that the Reformation was at least an ecclesiological crisis. This perception was clear to contemporaries. However reluctantly, all the reformers, radical as well as magisterial, came to recognise that they were in new territory, seeking to restore the 'true church'.

The fact that the origins of the crisis lay elsewhere than in a debate over the church does not vitiate this observation. Luther did not set out to separate from Rome, and few reformers viewed the splintering of western Christendom as other than a tragedy. Yet Roman repudiation of their aspirations, beginning with *Exsurge Domine*, caused Luther and subsequent reformers to conclude that it was the hierarchy which had departed from the true church, as Martyr himself was to argue.⁴² In Pelikan's memorable phrase, they were 'obedient rebels', seeking to remain in communion with the true church of apostolic foundation.⁴³ On both sides of the divide, as the Regensburg colloquy demonstrated, hopes persisted for reconciliation. Indeed, not until Reginald Pole narrowly failed to be elected pope in 1549 can the aspirations of the Italian *spirituali*, with whom Martyr had close ties, be said to have been finally extinguished.⁴⁴

The break with Rome did, however, come after over two centuries of growing instability. The late Middle Ages had seen a weakening of the authority of the papacy, a proliferation of theories on the nature of the church and its government, and growing

⁴⁰ S.H. Hendrix, 'Re-rooting the Faith: The Reformation as Re-Christianization', *CH* 69 (2000), 559.

⁴¹ Peter Matheson, *The Imaginative World of the Reformation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), highlights the appeal of the reformers' message and the consequent transformation of society's world view.

⁴² Most extensively in the scholion *De schismate*, from his posthumously published commentary on Kings. Under its full title, *An evangelici sint schismatici, quod se alienaverint a Papistis*, it appears in *Mel*, 102^r-113^v, and was reproduced in *LC* IV.6. An Italian translation, *Trattato della vera chiesa catholica, e della necessità di viver in essa*, was published in Geneva in 1573. A modern English translation, with introduction, is in *PML* 1: 162-224.

⁴³ J.J. Pelikan, *Obedient Rebels: Catholic Substance and Protestant Principle in Luther's Reformation* (London: SCM, 1964).

⁴⁴ Dermot Fenlon, *Heresy and Obedience in Tridentine Italy: Cardinal Pole and the Counter Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 219-37.

princely and communal resistance to ecclesiastical power. Among many theologians, as well as in monastic and intellectual circles, the medieval quest for the true church acquired a fresh intensity and diversity. The Avignon papacy, subsequent Great Schism and the conciliar movement all saw the legitimacy of the papacy's claims to universal sovereignty, epitomised by Boniface VIII's 1302 bull *Unam Sanctam*, called into question. On the other hand, faced with the diminution of their prestige and power, it was scarcely surprising that successive popes grew suspicious of change, and defensive of their prerogatives.⁴⁵

Indeed, the institutional inertia that had enabled the hierarchy to weather the storms of the previous two centuries, shrugging off the criticism of William of Ockham as well as Marsilius of Padua, and evading the conciliarists' hopes, was still substantial in the sixteenth century. It was the soteriological claims of the reformers, not internal pressure for institutional reform, which undermined the church's power. Luther's articulation of the justification by faith alone struck at the linchpin of late medieval religion. Its threat to the clerical estate and the hierarchy's authority was new, widespread and pointed.

Salvation was no longer dependent on the mediating acts of clergy ordained in the apostolic succession, but was secured by faith in the promises of God announced in Scripture. Dependence on the efficacy of the *ex opere operato* sacramental ministrations of the church was replaced by direct reliance on divine grace, through faith. The *raison d'être* not only for indulgences but for many traditional church practices was fatally undermined. Indeed, many were now portrayed as idolatrous. Further, the re-sacralisation of society entailed by the priesthood of all believers implied a de-sacralisation of the church's ministry.⁴⁶ Later reformers shared Luther's conclusion that the late-medieval church had effectively obscured the road to salvation. They accordingly shared a common agenda, to replant authentic Christianity in Europe, on the basis of the gospel of justification by faith in Christ alone. The resultant new piety was to be explicitly Christocentric, no less in Calvin than Luther.⁴⁷

The repudiation of late medieval religion was not a rejection of the church *per se*. *Nulla salus extra ecclesiam* was a not a disputed point. The church remained the divinely

⁴⁵ S.H. Hendrix, 'In Quest of the Vera Ecclesia: the Crises of Late Medieval Ecclesiology', *Viator* 7 (1976), 347-78 ; R.W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in The Middle Ages* (London: Penguin, 1970), 44-52, 142-50

⁴⁶ Pelikan, 16-18; Hendrix (2000), 562-66.

⁴⁷ Hendrix (2000), 568-70; Pelikan, 20-1; G. Yule, 'The Church in the Theology of the Reformers', *JEH* 34 (1983), 600-3.

appointed vehicle for the means of grace, the word and sacraments, to come to the world. It was essential if authentic Christian faith and practice were to be planted across Europe. However, the reformers' criticism was that the church had failed in its principal task, to be the instrument of the gospel: it was the Roman hierarchy's rejection of this critique which transformed a soteriological dispute into an ecclesiological crisis. An alternative church framework became necessary for the reformers' mission to renew European Christianity.⁴⁸ Martyr's own flight from Lucca was a vivid example of this priority. The fact that the church of his birth was on the point of suppressing the proclamation of the gospel was justification for his renunciation and his quest for an alternative church within which to minister.⁴⁹

The reformers hence conceived their work as a search for the true church. Pelikan notes how both the *Augsburg Confession* and Melancthon's *Apology* defend the reformers' adherence to Trinitarian credal orthodoxy, and proclaim their allegiance to the church of history. They resisted Eck's identification of the church with the visible hierarchy but also distinguished their position from Anabaptist separatism. Where it was compatible with Scripture, they also respected tradition: the quest for the apostolic church involved recognising its continued existence through time.⁵⁰

Their recovery of the true church was thus driven by the conviction that the restoration of the Christocentricity of faith and life was a return to the credal orthodoxy of the early church. Indeed, the Christological centre furnished an alternative approach to inherited assumptions over the *locus* of the church. The church is the communion of saints, the gathering of all believers in Christ. Its credal attributes, unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity, inhere in its connection to Christ, its head, rather than in the hierarchical succession. Through its union with Christ, the church already possesses these attributes. On earth, however, they are as yet imperfectly seen: the church's transformation awaits completion. It is a mixed body of genuine belief and mere outward profession, in which believers themselves still await perfection.⁵¹ The true

⁴⁸ Yule, 591-4; Hendrix (1976), 375-7.

⁴⁹ Martyr's correspondence gives several accounts of his dilemma. It was particularly the imminent prohibition of his teaching which led him to resign office and orders and flee. The first letter to survive was written to the canons of San Frediano a couple of days after his abrupt departure, and was followed some months later by a letter to the erstwhile Protestant congregation in Lucca; later he wrote a much longer, general letter, in which he criticises Nicodemism. McNair (1967), 287-8, LC 1071-3, 1073-85, PML 5: 65-6, 96-101, 67-95.

⁵⁰ Pelikan, 28-35, 43-8; Hendrix (1976), 377.

⁵¹ Pelikan, 12-16; J.T. McNeill, 'The Church in Sixteenth Century Reformed Theology', *Journal of Religion* 22 (1942), 259-60, 268-9.

church on earth is accordingly present where faith in Christ is found. It is planted by the sole instrument for faith's creation, the proclamation of the gospel. This is the origin of the reformers' doctrine of the marks. The preaching of the gospel and the administration of the 'visible words' of the gospel, the sacraments, were constitutive of the church. Since the human eye cannot distinguish true and false profession, it is the exercise of the marks which reveals the presence of the true church. The gospel, or in later formulations the *verbum Dei*, is God's instrument to create and sustain faith in Christ. Where this faith exists, the believer is part of the one, holy catholic and apostolic church. The means of the church's being are thus also the marks of its presence.⁵²

The variety of the ecclesiological solutions adopted by the reformers have this common root. Its intersection with other theological emphases, political circumstances and personal horizons resulted in the plurality of Reformation church polities and theories. The Reformed tradition was, for example, to develop a more institutional doctrine of the church than Luther's.⁵³ Yet most reformers remained conscious of a common agenda. Their high doctrine of the church stemmed from the conviction that it was the divine instrument for the communication of the gospel. Its institutional form was a matter of relative indifference, and could be accommodated to the circumstances of individual territories and cities.⁵⁴ Martyr's own career exemplifies the extent of this fellow-feeling. His commitment to the shared objectives of the reformers enabled him to minister in polities spanning virtually the whole theological spectrum of Reformation Europe. His defence of the churches of the Reformation, notably in the *De schismate*, assumes their shared mission.

The study of Martyr's ecclesiology is hence an enquiry into the thought of a reformer at once typical and unusual. He was characteristic of his generation in recognising that Europe's ecclesiastical landscape had changed irrevocably and that the restoration of a Christ-centred faith and life required the rebuilding of the church. He was unusual since, once out of Italy, he never exercised a pastoral role. He never bore the responsibility for implementing change, or had to adapt his principles to concrete reality as a pastor. His name was not inseparably associated with the reform of a church polity, a feature that both extended and limited his influence. His ecclesiology

⁵² Hendrix (1976), 375-7; E. Schlink, *The Coming Christ and the Coming Church* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1967), 119-22; McNeill (1942), 261.

⁵³ J.T. McNeill, 'The Doctrine of the Ministry in Reformed Theology', *CH* 12 (1943), 79- 84.

⁵⁴ Hendrix (2000), 268-77.

was articulated from the relative calm of the doctor's lectern. It sheds light on the diversity of thought on the church as the Reformed tradition emerged, and provides an illuminating comparison with reformers whose ecclesiology was put to the test of practice.

Martyr and the Church in England

In 1563 a set of twenty-one official homilies was published in London, reissuing and augmenting the twelve provided under Edward VI. A new sermon for Whit Sunday described the church:

The true church is an universal congregation or fellowship of God's faithful and elect people, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner-stone. And it hath always three notes or marks, whereby it is known: pure and sound doctrine, the sacraments administered according to Christ's holy institution, and the right use of ecclesiastical discipline. This description of the church is agreeable both to the scriptures of God, and also to the doctrine of the ancient fathers; so that none may justly find fault therewith.⁵⁵

This definition, ascribed to the bishop of Salisbury, John Jewel, is significant for its endorsement of the three-mark doctrine.⁵⁶ The *Forty-Two Articles* of 1553 had described two marks, derived from the 1530 *Augsburg Confession*. This was preserved unchanged in the 1563 and 1571 recensions. The new homily's approach departed from this, reflecting the growing concern for discipline among churches aligned with the emerging Reformed tradition.⁵⁷ Specifically, it suggests direct dependence on Peter Martyr, and raises the question of how closely the English Reformation marched to the drumbeat of Strasbourg, Zurich or Geneva.

⁵⁵ *Certain Sermons or Homilies Appointed to be read in Churches* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1822), 428.

⁵⁶ *The Two Books of Homilies Appointed to be Read in Churches*, ed. J. Griffiths (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1859), xxxiv; J.E. Booty, *John Jewel as Apologist of the Church of England* (London: SPCK, 1963), 7. The *Eleven Articles* of 1559, the standard for clergy subscription until they were superseded by the *Thirty-Eight Articles* of 1563, had anticipated the homily's adoption of a three-mark doctrine; *DER*, 349.

⁵⁷ The 1556 confession of the English church in Geneva, the 1560 Scots Confession which drew upon this, as well as the 1562 Belgic Confession, all made discipline the third mark; *Reformed Confessions of the 16th Century*, ed. A.C. Cochrane (London: SCM, 1966), 134-5, 176-7, 210-11.

As we shall see, Martyr was a leading exponent of a three-mark doctrine in the decades prior to 1563. The case for the homily deriving from his thought is circumstantial but strong. His influence with those Marian exiles who became leaders of the Elizabethan church was more extensive than that of any other reformer.⁵⁸ Indeed, his student and amanuensis in Oxford, companion in Strasbourg, and regular correspondent until his death, was Jewel. Their close personal rapport was matched by theological agreement. Martyr was quick to signal his approval of Jewel's 1562 *Apologia Ecclesiae Anglicae*, and it was to the bishop of Salisbury that Simler was to dedicate his biography of Martyr.⁵⁹ Other writers of the homilies drew on Martyr: the sermon 'against gluttony and drunkenness' includes sections of his 1561 Judges commentary.⁶⁰ Jewel's description of the church, though unexceptional, bears a close resemblance to the concision and balance of Martyr's own definitions. They can legitimately claim to be its primary source. The 1563 homily thus highlights the issue which this thesis explores: the relationship between the ecclesiology of the continental reformers, and that of the church in England.

On account of his involvement with English affairs from 1547, Peter Martyr provides an instructive case study. As England's foremost foreign scholar for most of Edward VI's reign, when the church's liturgy, doctrine and law were overhauled, and the nation's official Protestantism took shape and was both challenged and defended, his engagement with the process is singularly illuminating. To attempt to assess his direct influence, with some exceptions, would be to mistake the nature of change during the intensely active years, 1547-1553. Martyr's was one of many voices, including a blizzard of propaganda, which constituted England's religious discourse, both shaping and reacting to the formal instruments of reform. However, analysis of the correspondence of this programme with Martyr's ecclesiology provides an informative picture of the nature of England's alignment with the continental reformation. In particular, the reluctance of the regime to accord church discipline, Cox's 'rod', the priority which it had in Martyr's thought is revealing. Even at the time of greatest

⁵⁸ When the welcome news of Mary's death reached him in Zurich, he was dining with a future Elizabethan archbishop: S.F. Storer, 'The Life and Times of Edwin Sandys, Archbishop of York' (unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, University of London, 1973), 47.

⁵⁹ Jewel to Martyr, 7 Feb 1562, ZL I, 101; Martyr to Jewel, 24 Aug 1562, ZL I, 339-40; W.M. Southgate, *John Jewel and the Problem of Doctrinal Authority* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1962), 62-3; John Jewel, *Apologia Ecclesiae Anglicanae* (London, 1562); *idem*, *An Apology of the Church of England*, ed. J.E. Booty (New York: Cornell University Press, 1963).

⁶⁰ Anderson (1975), 384-6

opportunity for England's reformers, alignment with continental models was not consistently pursued.

This study accordingly has a dual focus. Chapters two, three and four elucidate Martyr's doctrine of the church. Its connections with his doctrine of union with Christ and his preferred images of the church are analysed and compared to those of his Reformed contemporaries. In chapter three, Martyr's concept of church order and government is explored, including the relation of church and state. Chapter four then turns to the particular issue of church discipline. An extended introduction to the approach to this issue by different streams of the Reformation is followed by an exposition of Martyr's own position. We then turn to an analysis of the ecclesiological aspects of Martyr's engagement with the church in England during the reign of Edward VI. Chapter five deals with Martyr's appraisal of the progress of reformation in England, comparing his approach to the regime's preferred direction through a number of incidents and key documents. Chapter six addresses the ecclesiological assumptions of the draft new code of canon law, exploring its correlation with Martyr's thought. In the concluding chapter, Martyr's distinctives are summarised, tensions in his ecclesiology are highlighted, and the nature of the Edwardian Reformation discussed in the light of his thought. Further, in an attempt to stimulate reflection on contemporary practice, an unashamed contrast is also drawn between the sixteenth century's concern for Christian discipline, and its comparative neglect in today's church. In an era where formal ecclesiastical discipline is widely seen as an 'unwelcome bridle', it is suggested that Martyr's emphasis on discipline as an integral element of the responsibility believers bear for one another within the local congregation has both contemporary resonance and ecclesial potential.

Chapter Two

The Nature of the Church

To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I Corinthians 1.2-3

Introduction

As Peter Martyr embarked on his career as a Protestant scholar in Strasbourg, the political turbulence facing the Reformation was matched by its internal dilemmas. The simple optimism of its early years had faded. The Catholic hierarchy had proved increasingly resistant to change. The old church, with imperial help, was setting its face against accommodation. The reformers were realising that their task was not to effect its transformation, but to construct its replacement. Martyr's own circumstances were a symptom of this shift. Hopes of reconciliation at Regensburg, where his friend Contarini had represented the papacy, had been quickly supplanted by a crackdown on heterodoxy. At one point expecting to participate in the colloquy himself, within two years Martyr had instead found himself a refugee from the church of his birth.¹

The new task required that attention be given to practical questions of church order, and hence to the task of defining the church local and earthly. This marked a theological transition. Luther's emphasis on the hidden-ness of the church and reluctance to identify an earthly counterpart to the spiritual body, had already given way to the need to order its local manifestations. The early editions of John Calvin's *Institutes* exemplify the shift. In 1536, the church, composed of the elect and hence known to God alone, is an object of faith. The visible, organised institution is peripheral. In 1543, however, Calvin observed that the word 'church' in Scripture implies two notions: the elect, and the visible church. Moreover, the focus of his

¹ McNair (1967), 197-9. It was probably through Contarini's influence that Martyr was invited to join the original delegation intended for Worms. A change of plan by the emperor occasioned alterations to the team, with Martyr omitted from the group which eventually crossed the Alps.

attention has switched decisively to the latter. Further, the development of Calvin's thought coincided with his contact with the churches of Strasbourg, the crossroads of reformed ecclesiological thought until the 1548 *Augsburg Interim*. His adoption of brotherly love as one criterion of the authentic church in the 1539 edition of the *Institutes*, for example, finds a parallel in Bucer's 1538 *Von der Waren Seelsorge*.² The terminology of the visible and invisible church was not Martyr's choice of vocabulary, but the dilemma which occasioned its use by Calvin and others is nevertheless present in his writing, which displays an oscillation between the church as a spiritual and as an earthly body.

Martyr wrote no systematic theological treatise, and the shape of his doctrine must therefore be pieced together from a range of sources. It is accessible primarily in the commentaries and polemical works published both during his lifetime and posthumously. His surviving correspondence and sermons furnish a useful secondary source. While his 'common place' method of exegesis generated comprehensive *loci* on some topics, for example the lengthy treatments of predestination and justification included in the Romans commentary, no comparably complete treatments of his ecclesiology exist.³ His thought on the church is rather found across a range of his writings. The researcher's task is ostensibly simplified by the collation of most of his common places, along with many other writings, into the successive editions of the posthumous *Loci Communes*. The first edition, edited by Robert Masson, appeared in 1576. In a decision consciously inspired by the shape of Calvin's *Institutes*, Masson arranged his collection in four books.⁴ Martyr's observations on the church were mainly gathered into the fourth book, along with several of his works on the sacraments.

The contemporary appeal of Masson's compilation is indicated by the number of

² Henry Strohl, *La Pensée de la Réforme* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1951), 214-22; Willem van 't Spijker, 'Bucer's influence on Calvin', in *Martin Bucer: Reforming Church and Community*, ed. D.F. Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 32-44. Van 't Spijker points out that Bucer's influence, already evident in the observations in the 1539 *Institutes* on the church's *communio*, visibility and discipline, appears to be at its height in the 1543 edition, especially in its analysis of the church offices.

³ *Rom*, 418-56, 543-613; *Romans*, 367^v-410^r, 285^r-312^v.

⁴ Masson was a member of the London French Stranger Church, which in Elizabeth's reign was firmly in the Genevan sphere of influence. Beza had encouraged the project of the *Loci*. Beza to Bullinger, 1 July 1563, in *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze*, ed. Hippolyte Aubert (Geneva: Droz, 1965), IV, 161-5.

editions over the following century.⁵ However, the renown this brought to Martyr's name can obscure the fact that the editorial structure of the work belongs to the Calvinist Masson, rather than to Martyr himself. Further, as a collection of pieces from a diversity of sources it inevitably lacks the coherence of a single work.⁶ In the case of Martyr's ecclesiology in particular, the arrangement of the *Loci* only partially reflects the underlying structure of his thought, especially its close connection with his doctrine of union with Christ, and the associated priority of the metaphor of the body of Christ.

This chapter outlines Martyr's thought on the nature of the church. The approach adopted is topical, proceeding from the Christological centre to Martyr's central image for the church, the body of Christ. The church's relationship with the word, and the doctrine of the marks of the church are then examined. The chapter terminates with a discussions of Martyr's understanding of ministerial office. Within each section, the development of Martyr's thought is identified, and connections are established between his understanding and the thought of his Reformed contemporaries.

Union with Christ

Una semplice dichiarazione sopra gli XII articoli della fede christiana

Martyr's ecclesiology flows from his Christology. The union which believers have with Christ, effected by the Holy Spirit, is the foundation for his understanding of the church. This is already evident in his brief 1544 exposition of the Apostles' Creed.⁷ His first published work, written not as a theological treatise but as pastoral counsel for his countrymen, it is the only one which deals topically with the principal points of Christian belief. It discloses Martyr as a theologian of some maturity. He had been in Strasbourg for less than two years. His career as a reformed exegete and author mainly

⁵ Donnelly and Kingdon (1990), 98-127, list fourteen separate editions of the *Loci*. The last was published in Amsterdam and Frankfurt in 1656. All were in Latin, apart from the single English translation by Anthony Marten (London: Denham & Middleton, 1583). No modern critical edition exists. References to the Latin text (LC) are to the 1583 edition (London: Vautrollerius, 1583).

⁶ McLelland (1957) 71n, comments for example that Masson's placing of Martyr's philosophical treatment of the natural knowledge of God at the opening of Book I of the *Loci* is a misrepresentation of Martyr's theological method.

⁷ Martyr, *Una semplice dichiarazione sopra gli XII articoli della fede christiana* (Basel, 1544).

lay ahead of him. Yet the principal outlines of his theology are already in place, and although the introduction hints at his philosophical formation, the doctrine espoused is that of his northern, evangelical hosts. As a discrete document, its Latin version was placed by Masson in Book II of the *Loci Communes*, and is thus not integrated into his collection of material on the church in Book IV.⁸ The work explicitly makes connections between the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, joining believers to Christ, and their membership of his body, the church. These ecclesiological assumptions underlie all of Martyr's subsequent writings.

The exposition of the articles on Christ and the Spirit is soteriological and pastoral. It is the implications for believers of the work of the Son and the Spirit which shape Martyr's discussion. The introduction to the significance of the articles concerning Christ illustrates this approach:

First, that this Son of God, the blessed Christ Jesus, is our right and lawful Lord. Next, that he was born for our good. Third, he endured all that he suffered on our account. Fourth, he rose above the skies for our benefit. Finally, he will personally return at the day of judgment for our redemption.⁹

The summary reflects the exposition's pastoral purpose. Each clause makes the connection between Christ in his person and work, and the believer. Martyr goes on to show that those who believe in Christ are related to the godhead in new ways. To the first person of the Trinity they now relate as his adopted sons; this accounts for the habitual address of God as 'Father' in the Pauline letters. To Christ in his human nature, believers relate as his brothers. This is also the relation believers have with one another, though Christ as the firstborn remains pre-eminent among them. It is as the firstborn as well as their redeemer that he is their master and lord.¹⁰ Further, as lord he is also their 'head', though this terminology is normally used by Martyr in connection with a further dimension of relationship consequent on Christ's incarnation, his doctrine of union with Christ.

The relation between believers and Christ is not merely external. He assumed and purified human nature, not only for himself but for believers. When reborn in Christ

⁸ LC II.18.1-51. The section heading is *D. Petri Martyris Vermilii Simplex Duodecim Fidei Articulorum Expositio*. A modern translation by Mariano di Gangi, introduced by Joseph McLelland, appears in *PML* 1: 17-80.

⁹ *USD*, 18; *PML* 1: 32.

¹⁰ *USD*, 28-31; *PML* 1: 35-6.

they are 'joined to him as living members', by faith. This is the heart of Martyr's soteriology. Christ is more than a moral exemplar and living relation. Believers are his 'bodily members'. So close is this union that although Martyr denies that Christ in his divine nature has brothers, he can at one point state that one outcome of his incarnation is to enable them to share his divine nature, which they receive from him.¹¹

It is through this union with Christ that his followers share in the benefits of his death and resurrection. Quoting Romans 6.4, Martyr comments: 'This should be understood as follows: in Christ, we are dead to sin, so that it has nothing more to do with us. By dying, Christ has cancelled it, now God no longer considers us worthy of death on its account'.¹² His treatment of the resurrection develops this, indicating the pastoral significance of the concept:

Since he is risen and is our head, we are also risen in him. Tell me, I pray you, when one holds his head above the deep and deadly waters of a fast-flowing stream, do we not say that he has escaped death even though his other bodily members are yet below the surface? The same holds true for us, who are all one body in Christ. [. . .] We must either deny that he is our head or acknowledge that we are members of his body - in which case we are compelled to affirm that our resurrection has begun in his.¹³

The biblical metaphor of the body is Martyr's preferred way of speaking of the organic nature of this union of Christ. It recurs throughout the 1544 work and in other writings. The deliberate application of the 'one flesh' language of Genesis 2 to the relationship between Christ and his believers becomes a common feature.¹⁴ Occasionally, he uses other figures to illustrate the relationship, describing Christ for example as the living root, and hence guarantee of future life, of a tree in winter, apparently dead but in fact waiting to burst forth in new life.¹⁵ Union with Christ is thus central not only to Martyr's soteriology but also to his doctrine of the Christian life. It enables believers to

¹¹ USD, 35-9; PML 1: 37-8; this latter point does not recur in subsequent works, where Martyr is normally careful to stress that union with Christ is both spiritual and relates the believer primarily to his perfect humanity.

¹² USD, 57; PML 1: 43.

¹³ USD, 73-4; PML 1: 47-8.

¹⁴ Martyr, *Cor*, 5^r: Et sunt usque adeo haec membra coniuncta capiti, ut dicantur caro ex carnibus eius, atque os ex ossibus eius. Cf, Martyr, *Tractatio de sacramento eucharistiae, habita in celeberrima Universitate Oxoniensi* . . . *Ad hec Disputatio de eodem eucharistiae sacramento* . . . (London [R. Wolfe], 1549), aiv^r, tii^r; PML 7: 10, 14; *Rom*, 372, *Romans*, 244^v.

¹⁵ USD, 74-5; PML 1: 48.

understand their privations and sufferings in this life, as a participation in Christ's sufferings, and is central to the believer's assurance of salvation and bodily resurrection.

The Holy Spirit is 'the cause and true author of bodily resurrection' as well as 'the beginning of Christian regeneration'. His was the power which both raised Christ, and indwells believers.¹⁶ Dealing with the creed's article on the Spirit, Martyr outlines his work. He is the origin of believing faith, habitually equated with spiritual rebirth. It is by his power that 'we are regenerated in Christ and conformed to the likeness of Christ'. He is the source of the new nature, and sustains the heavenward orientation of believers, who would otherwise be powerless under the weight of the sinful nature.¹⁷ Though his main work is persuasive inward teaching, when Martyr discusses union with Christ it is his regenerative work which is primary. Concluding the section, he urges gratitude for God's mercy on the grounds

that [he] has joined us to Christ, God's natural and true Son, not by angels or other creatures, but through the Spirit. That mercy has regenerated, sanctified and enriched us with such knowledge and heavenly gifts that we no longer lack the power, vigour, light and means to pursue and achieve what is good.¹⁸

The believer's union with Christ is thus a central feature of Martyr's thought. As a result of the Spirit's work the believer is not only joined to Christ, but also convinced of the kindness of God, and hence given assurance of salvation. This double work, of uniting and testifying, equips the believer, even in the face of the persecution which evangelical practice in Italy was beginning to attract, to live joyfully.¹⁹

Subsequent development

Union with Christ, which Martyr normally described as *communio*, is more fully expounded in his commentaries and in a significant exchange of correspondence with

¹⁶ USD, 75-6; PML 1: 48.

¹⁷ USD, 102-3; PML 1: 56.

¹⁸ USD, 112; PML 1: 59.

¹⁹ USD, 112-13; PML 1: 59.

John Calvin and Theodore Beza in 1555.²⁰ It has a number of dimensions in his thought and strong similarities with Calvin's position.²¹

The first aspect Martyr describes is a general communion with Christ. The incarnation establishes a connection with the whole human race: 'he is joined and made one with all men, since he was made partaker of flesh and blood'.²² This is a biological union: 'He was pleased (as is said in the epistle to the Hebrews) to communicate with us, in flesh and blood, by the benefit of his incarnation'.²³ All human beings, including Christian, Jew, and Turk, 'are joined with Christ in this way'.²⁴ Martyr had hinted at this preliminary communion in the *Una semplice dichiarazione*, where Christ is described as 'the head over humanity'.²⁵ The Romans commentary, published in 1558 but originating in lectures delivered in Oxford in 1551, develops his description of this general communion. He observes that it is weak, commenting later to Calvin that it is only 'very general and feeble'. It is a union 'according to matter', whereas at the level of what Martyr here calls 'nature', there is no union: the human nature assumed by Christ was sinless, pure and immortal, and hence different from ours, which is 'impure, corruptible, and miserably contaminated with sin'. This union describes the continuity of substance between the incarnate Christ and humanity, which establishes the

²⁰ Martyr to Calvin, 8 Mar 1555, LC 1094-6, tr. G.C. Gorham, *Gleanings of a few scattered ears during the period of the Reformation in England* (London, 1857), 340-5, and PML 5: 343-8. Martyr to Beza, undated, Beza, *Correspondance*, I, 153-55; LC 1108-9; PML 5: 134-7; a reference to Thomas Sampson's return to Strasbourg indicates it dates from March 1555. Calvin's reply to Martyr, 8 Aug 1555, CR 43:722-5, is translated in Gorham, 349-52.

²¹ Rankin (1997), 176-89, A-50-A-75. Rankin examines the correspondence, and relates it to Martyr's comments on Romans 8, included in the LC presentation of union with Christ, LC III.3.35-6.

²² *Rom*, 292, *Romans*, 193^f.

²³ Gorham, 342; the reference is to Hebrews 2.14-15: Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage.

²⁴ Beza, *Correspondance*, I, 154; LC, 1108; PML 5: 135.

²⁵ USD, 42; PML 1: 39.

possibility of a deeper union.²⁶

The general communion established by the incarnation is thus the first step towards the believer's union with Christ. In the Romans commentary, this is described as a 'spiritual communion', in which the believer is joined to Christ and has his humanity restored. It is a dynamic process, by which the faithful come to share in the perfection, purity and immortality of Christ's humanity. The effect is that when human nature

be endued with the Spirit of Christ, it is so repaired, that it differs not much from the nature of Christ. Yea so great is the affinity, that Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians says that we are flesh of his flesh and bone of his bones.²⁷

The most extensive treatment occurs in the exposition of Romans 6, especially in its discussion of the baptism of believers into Christ. This affords Martyr ample opportunity to employ his favoured image of 'grafting', emphasising the consequences of union in the believer. These are both salvific and moral.

Its effect is primarily to unite the believer to Christ in his death and resurrection. We die to sin since Christ has died to sin. His rising from the dead is the guarantee of the believer's future resurrection. The believer participates in Christ's life and spirit, sharing in his death and resurrection. He is accordingly both assured of forgiveness,

²⁶ *Rom*, 292: Videtur igitur oportet, quid sit esse in Christo. Primum id occurrit, quod omnibus mortalibus est commune. Dei enim filius, quia suscepit humanam naturam, cum omnibus hominibus coniunctus est. Nam cum ipsi commercium habeant cum carne et sanguine, ut testatur epistola ad Hebraeos, ipse quoque carnis et sanguinis factus est particeps. Sed ista coniunctio generalis est, et infirma, et tantum, ut ita dicam, iuxta materiam. Natura enim hominum ab ea natura quam Christus suscepit, longe disiuncta est. Natura enim humana in Christo et immortalis est, et exempta a peccato, et omni puritate ornata: nostra vero impura, corruptibilis, et peccato misere contaminata. At si ea donetur spiritu Christi, ita reparatur, ut a Christi natura non multum absit. Imo tanta fit accessio, ut Paulo in epistola ad Ephesios dicat, Nos esse carnes de carnibus eius, et ossa de ossibus eius. [...] Hoc idem in nobis usuvenit, cum donamur spiritu Christi. Nam praeter naturam, quam habemus cum illo communem, mentem quoque eius habemus, ut Paulus monet in priori ad Corinthios, et eundem sensum, quemadmodum requirit ad Philippenses: Idem, inquit, sensus sit in vobis, qui in Christo Iesu.

Romans 193^f; Gorham, 342. Martyr also discusses the two communions in commenting on I Corinthians 12.12, *Cor* 178^v, *LC* III.3.36: And certainly, even as we have said, we be so joined with Christ, as we be called flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones, because through his incarnation we are made of the same nature and kind that he is of, and afterward, his grace and spirit coming to us, we are made partakers of his spiritual conditions and properties, as it has been above declared.

²⁷ *Rom*, 292, *Romans*, 193^f.

and fortified against adversity by the assurance of eternal life. A counterpart is that the union brings liberation from the accusation and condemnation of the law.²⁸ The believer's baptismal vows express this union, by which he has journeyed into Christ: 'And by this form of speaking is signified, that we pass into Christ, so that we may be most closely joined together with him in faith, hope, and love'.²⁹

The transition is also understood as a separation. Believers move into the family of Christ and out of the family of Adam. Cut off from the wild olive tree, 'that is, from the corrupt nature of Adam', they are grafted into Christ. This is a soteriological necessity: 'And forasmuch as all mankind is procreated of him [Adam], none can attain to salvation through Christ, unless he pass from the kindred of Adam into the family of Christ'. Martyr attributes Paul's use of 'grafting' language to Christ's metaphor of the vine and the branches. It expresses 'our great conjunction with Christ'. This union is the origin of the believer's ability to live the Christian life. Only through living in Christ as the 'living root' can good fruit be produced. To put on Christ is to assume the obligation to display his qualities:

But we very differently being cut off from the wild olive tree, and unfruitful plant, that is from the corrupt nature of Adam, are grafted into Christ, so that from him we should not only take life and spirit, but indeed having left our old affections, should put on his nature and properties. [. . .] For it is necessary, if we will respond to our regeneration, that the affection and feelings of Christ each day more and more flourish in us.

Sharing in Christ's death and resurrection accordingly involves mortification. These ethical consequences can also be described pneumatologically: 'so we being in regeneration grafted into Christ, ought to live by his Spirit, and with him both to die, and also to rise again; that even as Christ could not be holden of the sorrows of death, so also cannot the tyranny of sin any longer hold us in bands'.³⁰

²⁸ *Rom*, 218, *Romans*, 145^f.

²⁹ *Rom*, 215: *Atque hac forma loquendi significatur, nos in Christum transire, ita ut cum eo quam arctissime fide, spe, charitate coniungamur. Romans*, 143^v.

³⁰ *Romans*, 144^{f-v}; *Rom*, 217: *At nos longe aliter, ab agresti oleastro, et infructuosa planta, hoc est, vitiata Adami natura recisi in Christum inserimur, ut ab eo non tantum vitam et spiritum ducamus, verum etiam relictis nostris affectibus pristinis, eius vires et proprietates induamus. [. . .] Necesse autem est, si regenerationi nostrae volumus respondere, ut affectus et sensus Christi in dies in nobis magis magisque germinent.*

In the 1555 correspondence this spiritual union acquires two dimensions: spiritual, and 'mystical' or 'secret'. Spiritual communion now relates in Martyr's thought principally to the sanctification of the believer:

So besides that [general] communion, there is added this; that in due season faith is breathed into the elect, whereby they may believe in Christ; and thus they have not only the remission of sins and reconciliation with God (wherein consists the true and solid method of justification), but further, receive the renovating influence of the Spirit, whereby our bodies also, our flesh, and blood, and nature, are made capable of immortality, and become every day more and more conformable to Christ (*Christiformia*), so to speak.³¹

Writing to Beza, Martyr explains that in this union 'we are clothed in Christ's flesh, we are watered by his blood, we live and move in the soul of Christ'. This is a process as well as an event. While 'the gift of immortality and of eternal glory' already belong to the believer in this communion, they are also the foundation for a progressive work of transformation in which the human nature which Christ assumed is restored. Spiritual communion involves the possession of these gifts, and their eschatological fulfilment:

Because of these heavenly gifts which we have acquired by believing, we begin while living here to have that nature developed and we will have it restored day by day and finally perfected when we reach the blessed resurrection.³²

Martyr terms this communion a 'conjunction of similarity'. It is the work of the Spirit of Christ, 'by which we are from our regeneration renewed into the fashion of his glory'.³³

He then postulates a third, intermediate communion, providing the hidden connection between the general and spiritual communion. This mystical communion is the 'conjunction of union', by which the believer is joined to Christ. It is to this communion that Martyr now applies the language of the grafting of the believer into Christ, by which we become 'flesh of his flesh, bone of his bones'. This communion is the bond of union between Christ and the believer. As both the work of the Holy Spirit and the connection through which he flows to engender growth, it is the 'fount and origin of all

³¹ Gorham, 342-3.

³² Beza, *Correspondance*, I, 154-5; LC 1108-9; PML 5: 135-6.

³³ Gorham, 343.

the celestial and spiritual likeness which we obtain, together with Christ'.³⁴ This secret union is fully established at conversion, and is symbolised by the sacraments, by which through faith it attains further strength and growth:

By faith we are lifted up from the level of nature so that we are joined to Christ even as members are joined to the head; then from the immortal and heavenly head, whom we already really possess through faith, various gifts, heavenly benefits, and divine properties flow down into us. This is what I had in mind, dear brother, in speaking about our conjunction with Christ.³⁵

Scripturally, Martyr enlists the imagery of believers as members of Christ, who is their head, as support for this concept of mystical communion. Colossians 2.19 and Ephesians 4.6 speak of this union in describing the 'joints and ligaments' through which believers draw 'the Spirit, heavenly life, and all the properties and powers of God and of Christ'. The Bible's use of marriage as a metaphor for the relationship of Christ and his members is also cited: as the husband is joined to his wife 'by the greatest necessity, so we are joined with Christ's body and blood by a marvellous and intimate association, even though our substances remain unmixed in both parts'.³⁶

To summarise the doctrinal complex which culminates in these letters, the believer has a twofold communion with Christ in his incarnation, and the connection between them is established by the mystical communion. The communion is general, since as a consequence of the incarnation he shares the same substance which Christ assumed. It is spiritual, in that he shares by faith the perfect nature of Christ's humanity. What was lost in the fall - immortality, glory, and perfection - is restored in this communion, although this restoration is progressive. Finally, the communion is mystical: the means by which the restoration is accomplished is the secret communion, by which believers are grafted into Christ by the Holy Spirit, and through which his life and transformation flows into them. Conceptually, it is this mystical communion which provides the link with Martyr's ecclesiology, since it is the grafting of the believer into Christ which joins him to all his members.

³⁴ *Ibid*; Martyr continues : Thus we first put him on; and so are called by the Apostle, flesh of his flesh, bone of his bones. And from this communion which I have now explained that latter one is perfected so long as we live on earth. For the members of Christ are ever intent on becoming more like him.

³⁵ Beza, *Correspondance*, I, 154-5; LC 1109;PML 5: 136.

³⁶ Beza, *Correspondance*, I, 155;LC 1109;PML 5: 136-7.

Nevertheless, despite the evidence of these letters, Martyr's distinction between the mystical and spiritual communion does remain somewhat elusive. It is not prominent in any of his published works. Indeed, the texts which in 1555 are held to relate to the mystical communion are in other works, as we have seen, seen to be descriptive of the spiritual union. Moreover, the notion cannot be said to be crucial to his ecclesiology. Though Martyr's earlier works await the distinction between the spiritual and mystical communions, they deal extensively with the nature of the believer's union with Christ, and the benefits which flow from it. The 1549 Oxford disputation on the sacraments arguably hints at his later mystical and spiritual distinction, as Martyr explains that faith in Christ is the instrument of a real change into the likeness or similitude of Christ.

For even if we embrace Christ in the sacrament by faith, yet our actual change into Christ follows it. For our mind is made lively and ready to show honour to God, and our body rendered more obedient to the Spirit; so a real change occurs, of mind and body. In this way we are to understand that we are gathered into one whole in Christ, because we thus become conformable with him.³⁷

The completeness of the union the believer enjoys with Christ is characteristically summarised by Martyr in terms of Aristotelian causation. The believer shares all Christ's human attributes, is governed by the same Spirit, and has his life oriented to the same ends:

Hereby it is manifest, how faithful and godly men are in Christ, and by all the categories of causes. For we have the same matter, even the self same first grounds of form, for we are endowed with the same notes, properties, and conditions which he had. The efficient cause whereby we are moved to work, is the same Spirit by whom he himself was moved. Finally, the end is the same, namely that the glory of God should be advanced.³⁸

Corda points out that union with Christ is central to Martyr's sacramental theology.³⁹ It is no less crucial to his doctrine of the church. The Romans commentary makes the connection between *communio* and ecclesiology. Union with Christ brings union with

³⁷ Martyr, *Tractatio*, 59^v-60^r; PML 7: 231.

³⁸ *Romans*, 193^r; *Rom*, 293: Ex his apparet, quomodo fideles homines et pii sint in Christo, idque per omnia causarum genera. Materiam enim habemus eandem, inchoationes etiam formae easdem, donati enim sumus eisdem notis, proprietatibus, et conditionibus quas ille habuit. Efficiens causa qua impellimur ad agendum, est idem spiritus quo ipse agebatur. Postremo finis etiam idem est, nimirum, ut illustretur gloria Dei.

³⁹ Corda, 170-6.

other believers. The work of the Holy Spirit in creating justifying faith unites the believer to the body as he is united to the head. Baptism is the public sign of this twofold union:

in very deed we are grafted both into Christ and into the Church, as touching the mind and spirit, as soon as we are justified. But because that is unknown to men, it is afterward known, when we are initiated by the outward sacrament, also the right to eternal life is sealed unto us by baptism.⁴⁰

The mystical and spiritual communion which believers have with Christ thus involves a communion with other believers. Transcending their spatial and temporal separation, this union is the ground of the church's unity and catholicity. Further, as the following section on the church as the body of Christ outlines, it is this union with Christ which gives the ministry of word and sacrament its significance in Martyr's thought.

Martyr in context

This doctrine of union with Christ places Martyr firmly in the theological orbit of Martin Bucer and his circle. If his expression of the doctrine is distinctive, it nevertheless shares its principal concepts and vocabulary with Bucer and Calvin.⁴¹ A significant feature of the 1555 exchange with Calvin, moreover, is to reveal that neither looked to the other as the source of the notion of 'mystical communion', suggesting a common heritage.

The immediate origins of the reformers' doctrine of union with Christ lie in Martin Luther's teaching on the benefits of faith. In *The Freedom of a Christian* he described how, through faith, the soul is united to Christ, as a bride is united to her bridegroom. Christ and the human soul become one flesh and share everything in common. Christ takes the soul's death, sin and condemnation, and bestows on it the grace, life and salvation that are his. The soul is now 'adorned with all his goodness.'⁴² The exchange

⁴⁰ *Rom*, 220; *Romans*, 146^r. Cf *Cor*, 178^r: Duplex autem coniunctio in membris huius corporis observatur. Una est, quam retinere debent inter sese, altera quam cum Christo habeant oportere.

⁴¹ For Bucer's influence over Calvin's views on communion and the church, see Willem van 't Spijker, 'Bucer's influence on Calvin' in D.F. Wright, ed. (1994), 32-44, and Alexandre Ganoczy, *The Young Calvin* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988 [Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1966]), 158-68.

⁴² WA 4: 12-73; LW 31: 333-77.

takes place through the union. While the development of this doctrine is now most closely associated with Calvin, it was to Bucer that he owed his distinctive description of the believer's union with Christ. In his 1527 Ephesians commentary, Bucer had made the connection between election in Christ and union with him. Salvation flowed from Christ as the head, since believers are grafted into him. We become 'flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone'. Calvin developed Luther's notion of the soul's union with Christ using vocabulary of *insertio*, *incorporatio*, *insitio* and *inplantatio*, which he drew from Bucer.⁴³ Martyr's discussion of the believer's union with Christ displays the same conception of grafting and union.

Similarly, Martyr's teaching on the role of the Spirit in creating and maintaining the union follows the emphases of Bucer and Calvin. The 1537 *Confessio Fidei de Eucharistia*, drafted by Calvin and signed by both Bucer and Capito, had established their agreement. The Spirit is the bond of fellowship between Christ and his people. The *communio* which unites believers to Christ and to one another stems from his Spirit. He is the bond. The consequence is that they share in the power of his life-giving flesh in heaven.⁴⁴ This is not only parallel to Martyr's own thought on the role of the Spirit. It also suggests the root from which the doctrine of the third, intermediate communion of the 1555 correspondence stems, when both were to agree that the Spirit was the agent of this union. Further, both were to deny that the union implied any mixing of substance between Christ and his people.⁴⁵

For Martyr, the fruits of Christian belief flow from union with Christ in his death and resurrection. Calvin's concept is similar: by grafting into Christ, we become partakers of every good, including Christ's death and resurrection.⁴⁶ Their expressions are not identical: Calvin's conception of the results of union includes, for example the restoration of the image of God, which Martyr does not stress to the same extent. Nevertheless, his position is in principle the same. Every good thing we need comes

⁴³ W.P. Stephens, 'Bucer's Commentaries on Ephesians,' in D.F. Wright, ed. (1994), 48-9; van 't Spijker (1994), 34.

⁴⁴ van 't Spijker (1994), 33; CR 29: 536-8, 30: 393-7; *Inst.*, III.1.1, 3.

⁴⁵ Though the correspondence does not mention this, it is possible that the articulation of the secret union by Calvin at least arose from the need to repudiate Andreas Osiander's teaching of an essential unity of believers with Christ. In the 1559 edition of the *Institutes*, Calvin explicitly attributes Osiander's error to his failure to understand the union with Christ effected by the 'secret power of his Spirit'. CR 30: 536-7; *Inst.*, III.11.5. François Wendel, *Calvin: The Origin and Development of his Religious Thought* (London: Fontana, 1965 [Paris, 1950]), 235-6.

⁴⁶ CR 29: 690-1; 30: 427; *Inst.*, III.2.35, 3.9.

from Christ and is ours on account of the union: our wisdom, our righteousness, our purity, our power, our life.⁴⁷ Moreover, both lay stress on the moral effect of the union: it brings the obligation to strive for purity and avoid corruption.⁴⁸

The body of Christ

Una semplice dichiarazione

When he turns to the creed's article on the church, the biblical metaphor of the body pervades Martyr's treatment. The church is Christ's 'noble body', of which he alone is head. This 'dear body' has been given him by God. It is repeatedly described as a 'holy body', requiring care and nourishment.⁴⁹

The union effected by the Spirit is foundational to this concept. The connection is explicit in the opening paragraph:

the secret of community is revealed in the link between these articles of faith: first, we confess the Holy Spirit; then we think of the body of the faithful brought together by him. He unites everyone in the world who, with integrity and sincerity, trusts in the name of Jesus Christ.'

Only the work of the Spirit accounts for the comparison which Paul makes between the church and a body. To the eye, the church appears diverse and disunited, especially owing to 'the earthly and carnal nature of professing Christians'. But properly understood, it is 'composed of all who are drawn to faith in Christ by the Holy Spirit'. Hence it can rightly be termed a body.⁵⁰

Martyr oscillates between calling the church a 'company of believers' and a body. The two are counterparts since the Spirit both creates faith and works union. The church 'is a divine body held together by the Holy Spirit' and also the 'company of the faithful'. Without the Spirit, there could be no membership of the body 'of which Christ is the head and his most Holy Spirit the soul', for no one can properly acknowledge Christ as Lord apart from the prior activity of the Spirit. The 'true church' is therefore not the

⁴⁷ CR 29: 772-3; *Inst.*, III.15.5.

⁴⁸ CR 29: 1125-6; *Inst.*, III.6.3.

⁴⁹ USD, 129, 131, 144, 146, 156, 163; PML 1: 63, 64, 68, 69, 72, 74.

⁵⁰ USD, 114-5; PML 1: 59.

work of men but of the 'Spirit of Christ'.⁵¹

The credal attributes of the church are the fruit of the Spirit's work. Its unity and catholicity have their origin in his activity, and are related to each other. Further, unity is the consequence of agreement in the truth: 'The church is one, because of a common faith'. But the faith confessed by the church is that inspired by the Spirit: he reveals the truth of the Scriptures and creates faith.⁵² Similarly, the church is catholic, because it is one universal body, embracing all whom God has sovereignly drawn to Christ, and who make the common confession:

The church embraces within itself a noble and special community consisting of everyone who, having been truly gathered into this body, belongs to Christ and confesses the one faith. Any other kind of union would be worthless without the unity of faith.⁵³

To summarise Martyr's teaching in the *Una semplice dichiarazione*, the union which believers have with Christ constitutes them as his body. Brought into this by the regenerative, persuasive work of the Holy Spirit, their common confession is to acknowledge Christ as Lord. The organic description of the church as a body has its confessional counterpart, in which it is described as a company of believers. Conceptually, however, the church is primarily a divine creation: the work of the Holy Spirit, incorporating the elect into Christ's body, precedes and empowers the church's as a confessional community.⁵⁴ Indeed, it not only has its origin in the work of the Spirit, but depends on him for its life: 'The church is a body animated by the Spirit of God'.⁵⁵

Subsequent development

In later writings these emphases are developed without major adjustment. Union with Christ, the body, and the *coetus credentium* remain the anchor-points. The most

⁵¹ USD, 117-20; PML 1: 60-1.

⁵² USD, 115, 120; PML 1: 59, 61.

⁵³ USD, 119-20; PML 1: 61.

⁵⁴ Martyr's doctrine of election is not prominent in *Una semplice dichiarazione*, but is nonetheless assumed: indeed, in his exposition of the article concerning the return of Christ, he reveals he already held to *gemina praedestinatio*: Because the world may wonder how some of those who have borne the name of Christian are appointed to salvation and some to damnation, our Christ of perfect justice will show plainly why this distinction is made. USD, 89; PML 1: 52.

⁵⁵ USD, 162; PML 1: 74.

accessible of Martyr's definitions of the church, selected by Masson from Martyr's observations on I Corinthians 1.2 to introduce Book IV of the *Loci*, reflects this. Its emphasis initially falls on the church's divine origin:

The church's name stems from the Greek word 'kalein', which is 'to call'. For no one can have any part in it, who does not come to it by the calling of God. And to define it, we say that it is a body of believers, and of the regenerate, whom God gathers together in Christ, through the word and Holy Spirit, and governs through ministers by purity of teaching, by the lawful use of the sacraments, and by discipline.⁵⁶

Martyr's habitual exegetical approach lies behind this formulation: the etymology of *ecclesia* determines the shape of the definition. This accounts for the omission of mention of the body of Christ. As he expands the comment into an informal excursus on the church, he corrects this. The following line reads:

And it is everywhere called the body of Christ, because all its members have him for their head, from whom by the joints and sinews they take their growth, and attain to life by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁷

As in 1544, the church is a body whose members have Christ for their head. Christ is the source of its growth, and the Holy Spirit the means of its life. The favourite language of 'flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones' reappears.⁵⁸ All this is consistent with the former work, though the language of 'joints and sinews' introduces a new image, drawn from Ephesians or Colossians, which was to recur in subsequent works.⁵⁹

Masson's elevation of this passage from the I Corinthians commentary to first place in Book IV of the *Loci* can suggest that for Martyr the body metaphor was subordinate.

⁵⁶ *Cor*, 5^r: Vox Ecclesiae, deducitur a Graeco verbo καλεῖν, quod est vocare. Nulli enim partes eius habere possunt, qui Dei vocatione ad eam non accesserint. Et si definienda sit, esse dicemus coetum credentium, ac renatorum, quos Deus in Christo colligit per Verbum et Spiritum sanctum, atque per ministros regit puritate doctrinae, legitimo sacramentorum usu, et disciplina. *CP* IV.1.1.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*: Vocatur autem passim corpus Christi: quia omnia eius membra illum habent pro capite, a quo per commisuras et compages augmentum capiunt, et vitam per Spiritus sancti diffusionem nanciscuntur, et sunt usque adeo haec membra coniuncta capiti, ut dicantur caro ex carnibus eius, atque os ex ossibus illius.

⁵⁸ In the dedication of his 1549 treatise on the eucharist, Martyr cites both the original Genesis verse and its application to the church in Ephesians 5.21ff; Martyr, *Tractatio*, tii^r; *PML* 7: 14.

⁵⁹ Eg, *Iud*, 106^v: A capite motus et sensus per nervos in membra defluunt, ut Paulus ad Ephesios et Colossenses pulcherrime docet.

The evidence of his works as a whole shows that the reverse is in fact the case. In each work, when he has occasion to comment on the church, it is to this image that he most frequently turns. The diversity of issues to which he applies the metaphor indicates its pedagogical usefulness to Martyr and reflects his conviction that this is the primary biblical image for understanding the church and its relationship with its Lord.

Thus, commenting on I Corinthians 12.12, Martyr employs the figure in order to distinguish the true church from the visible. Those who are spiritually 'dead', are not genuine members of the church: a body comprises only 'living' members. The 'wicked' have no part of the church, though Martyr carefully distinguishes his position from Donatism: the church today is not without 'spot or wrinkle'.⁶⁰ An almost identical argument occurs in his discussion of Absalom's entry into the Jerusalem Temple in the Samuel commentary. It is a contradiction in terms for a body to have dead members. The presence of such people in the church is likened to the presence of evil or rotten humours in the body. His depiction of the church as a body is accompanied by the parallel of the church as a congregation of believers: those who have not received the word and Spirit, and therefore lack faith, have no true part in it.⁶¹ In the *De schismate* scholion, from the 1566 commentary based on Martyr's Zürich lectures on the books of Kings, a similar argument is made: the church has no dead members, though it has mingled in it 'many ungodly and wicked people'. These, like the rotten fish, foolish virgins, and tares of Christ's teaching, misleadingly appear to be members, but are in reality 'like bad and contaminating fluids in the human body'.⁶²

The Samuel passage develops this understanding, discussing the communion enjoyed by members of the church. The 'body of saints' is gathered to have communion, which is to share in Christ, in the Spirit, in grace, the word, the sacraments, prayers, persecutions and the like. Above all, it shares in the goods which are poured out from its head, and

⁶⁰ *Cor*, 178^{r-v}; *ibid*, 5^r: Sine macula et ruga non est in praesentia, sed erit in die Iesu Christi.

⁶¹ *Sam*, 567^r: Iactet se Antichristus in ecclesia, veniat Absolon in ecclesiam, tamen non sunt de ecclesia. Inepti sunt qui dicunt, Sunt membra ecclesiae, sed mortua, quae possint vivificari et excitari. Corporis viventis membrum mortuum statuere, est dicere membrum esse non membrum. Si viventis corporis membrum sit, oportet vivat. Paulus 1. Cor 6. correxist hanc sententiam. Tollam membrum Christi, et faciam membrum meretricis? Quasi dicat: Hoc fieri non potest. Sunt ergo in ecclesia mali, ut mali humores in corpore: ut dolores excitent: non tamen vivunt aut vivificantur putres humores huiusmodi. Nam ecclesia est coetus credentium, qui colliguntur a Deo in Christo, per spiritum sanctum et verbum. Proinde impii licet versentur Hierosolymis et in ecclesia, tamen non sunt vere de ecclesia.

⁶² *Mel*, 111^v; *PML* 1: 216-7.

diffused through the body by 'joints', as described in Ephesians and Colossians.⁶³ This characteristic also excludes 'wicked men' from membership of the communion of saints since they share neither in neither the union which the Christian has with Christ, nor that which he enjoys with other believers.⁶⁴

A further application of the body metaphor is its use to explain the catholicity of the church. Though numerical strength is not an indicator of the presence of the true church, Martyr does expect to see it represented throughout the world. The Donatists, in restricting the church to their own group and region, denied its catholicity.⁶⁵ Rather, Christians are members one of another and 'most nearly knit together' even though some live in France, others in England, and so on. Their physical separation one from another diminishes their spiritual union no more than the presence of Christ's human nature in heaven (Martyr became a prominent opponent of Lutheran ubiquity) hinders his spiritual communion with believers.⁶⁶

In later works he develops this treatment. A 'body' can legitimately refer to an entity which has 'parts distant from one another but these are nevertheless joined together in an orderly way at a single word of command - a people, flock or legion'.⁶⁷ It is in this sense that the church is a body. The one body of the church includes not only

⁶³ *Sam*, 567^r: Ecclesia est corpus sanctorum. Congregantur ut communionem habeant: Habent autem earum rerum communionem, ex quibus apparet tales non esse de ecclesia, nec communicare illius bonis, etsi in ecclesia sint. Communia sunt, Christus, Spiritus sanctus, gratia, verbum, sacramenta, preces, persecutiones et alia multa huius generis: Quemadmodum corpora Ethnicorum quandoque simul congregantur, multa communia habent, dignitates, honores, labores. In symbolo dicimus, Credo sanctam ecclesiam, et per expositionem subiicimus, sanctorum communionem. Praecipue corpus Christi communicat iis bonis, quae per caput instillantur: per ipsum habemus spiritum et vitam Ephes. 4 Col.2 Derivantur per commisuras in totum corpus.

⁶⁴ *Cor* 178^r: De hoc instruimur pulcherrime ad Ephesios capite quarto, ubi scribitur, a capite Christo suppeditari spiritum et vitam per commisuras et ligamenta membrorum in totum corpus: ita ut iuxta mensuram uniuscuiusque partis augmentum fiat in corpore. Necnon ad Colossenses capite secundo idem exponitur. Ex quibus liquet, impios homines non vere esse de Ecclesia, cum a capite Christo spiritus eis non instilletur. *CP* III.3.37

⁶⁵ *Rom*, 479; *Romans*, 327^r. This argument recurs in the *De schismate* scholion - the Roman church cannot be described as catholic, since it has separated from 'the majority of churches'; its claims of numerical superiority are irrelevant; *Mel*, 112^r; *PML* 1: 218-9.

⁶⁶ *LC* III.3.38; see also the parallel treatment in the dedication to Cranmer of Martyr's *Tractatio de sacramento eucharistiae, habita in celeberrima Universitate Oxoniensi . . . Ad hec Disputatio de eodem eucharistiae sacramento . . .* (London [R. Wolfe], 1549), tii^r; *PML* 7: 15.

⁶⁷ *Mel*, 111^v; *PML* 1: 216.

individual believers, but also congregations: 'it has many parts - local churches - which are called the portion and inheritance of God'.⁶⁸ By 'local church' Martyr refers primarily to the church of a region or city: 'Now the Roman church is local, like those of Alexandria, Milan, or Ephesus, but the Catholic Church is universal'.⁶⁹ Further, the latter is found wherever there are those who believe rightly and are united to Christ; it is not bound to a cathedral or place. Though local churches associated with places are objectionable only when they lay claim to a primacy over others, the universal church antedates every local expression.⁷⁰

Closely related to his doctrine of union with Christ, the metaphor of the body gives Martyr's ecclesiology a dynamic character. It enables him to explain the work of the Holy Spirit, vivifying and sustaining the life of the church. It provides a means of distinguishing the true church from the mixed, visible institution. It assists him in describing the catholicity of the church, and the communion which believers share wherever they live. It is the counterpart to his description of the church as a company of the faithful, a description which is also closely related to his pneumatology. The church owes its life to the Holy Spirit, who regenerates the elect and is the author of their faith, though, as we shall see, these works of the Spirit are for Martyr normally accomplished through the *Verbum Dei*.

Martyr in context

In his emphasis on the church as the body of Christ, Martyr stood in the mainstream of the Reformation, as it appropriated this traditional imagery. The usage was not extensively employed by Luther himself, who conceived the church primarily in its relation to the gospel. A seven-year-old child, he wrote in the 1537 *Smalcald Articles*, knows that the church is 'holy believers and sheep who hear the voice of their Shepherd'.⁷¹ In the 1539 *On the Councils and the Church* his preferred expression was 'a holy Christian people', found wherever the Holy Spirit grants faith in Christ.⁷² Though the church as the mystical body of Christ informed his ecclesiology, it was not

⁶⁸ *Mel*, 102^v; *PML* 1: 174.

⁶⁹ *Mel*, 103^r; *PML* 1: 176.

⁷⁰ *Mel*, 103^r; *PML* 1: 176-7.

⁷¹ Luther, *Smalcald Articles*, WA 50.249-50; *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. T.G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959), 315.

⁷² For example, WA 50: 624-6; LW 41: 143-7.

paramount in its expression.⁷³ His contemporaries and successors were to make more extensive use of the metaphor.

Zwingli recognised a dual usage of the word 'church' in Scripture, though he was to be known for his stress on the visible, local church. Particularly before the emergence of Anabaptism in Zürich, the universal church as one body of believers, gathered by the Holy Spirit, formed an important dimension of his thought.⁷⁴ In the *Sixty-Seven Articles*, he first revealed the use the reformers would make of the biblical imagery of the body. Following a statement on Christ's headship, he commented:

From this follows, first, that all who live in this head are members and children of God. This is the church or communion of saints, the bride of Christ, the *ecclesia catholica*.⁷⁵

Towards the end of his life Zwingli particularly stressed this invisible character of the universal church, highlighting its identity as the community of the elect, brought together by the Holy Spirit.⁷⁶

Martyr's ecclesiology has some correspondence with these emphases, but it is with the dynamic character of the body metaphor in Bucer's thought that his language bears the closest affinity.⁷⁷ The church's primary identity as the body of the elect who have Christ for their head was central to Bucer's ecclesiology. As we have seen, the union which believers have with Christ was an early feature of his theology: in 1523 he held that our possession of Christ's benefits flow from this union.⁷⁸ His Ephesians commentaries, dating from 1527 and 1551, in turn reveal the church's character as the body of Christ as a settled feature of his thought. Election precedes faith. Those chosen to be 'in Christ' are defined by belief in him, and are united to him as their head, grafted into him. While, the 'flock of Christ', the 'people of God' and the 'temple of God' are among the images Bucer uses to describe the church, his most frequent recourse is to the metaphor of the body. As its head, everything comes from Christ: he is the

⁷³ Strohl (1951), 174.

⁷⁴ W.P. Stephens, *The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 260-1.

⁷⁵ *Sixty-Seven Articles*, in *Confessions and Catechisms of the Reformation*, ed. M. Noll (Leicester: Apollos, 1991), 40.

⁷⁶ Stephens (1986), 260-1, 267.

⁷⁷ Simler, *Oratio*, records that Martyr's conversion to reformed convictions in Naples arose from his reading of Zwingli's 1525 *De Vera e falsa religione* and 1529 *De providentia Dei*, and Bucer's commentaries on the gospels (1530) and (pseudonymously) the psalms (1529); PML 5: 19-20.

⁷⁸ Stephens (1994), 48, n7.

source of its life and strength, vitality and movement.⁷⁹

In his commentaries on John's gospel, Bucer's emphasis fell on the mixed nature of the church. He was now particularly concerned to respond to Anabaptist criticism of the reformers' retention of infant baptism.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, the church as a body remained the dominant motif. Though he taught that the church was an object of faith, the metaphor of the body enabled him to insist that it could be recognised in its life on earth since the community of the regenerate is marked not only by faith, but also by mutual love. The church as a body is hence a social motif for Bucer. The true church comprises men and women who practise this love as well as exercising faith. This dimension of Bucer's thought is the ecclesiological counterpart of his conception of the Christian life as a 'living for others'. The body is therefore an organism governed by heartfelt love, a community which operates for mutual edification.⁸¹

Martyr's conception of the church as the body of Christ is parallel to Bucer's treatment. The headship of Christ, his provision for the life and growth of the body through his Holy Spirit, and the union which believers possess with him and with one another, are common to both writers. There are differences in their appropriation of the metaphor. In particular, Bucer's emphasis on the mutual love operating between members of the body is less prominent in Martyr. He lacks the priority which Bucer places on the Christian life as 'living for others', and his stress falls more on the vertical dimension of the relationship. Nevertheless, Bucer can fairly claim to have exerted a decisive influence over this aspect of Martyr's thought.

The contrast with Calvin corroborates this alignment. As the first three editions of the *Institutes* record, Calvin's conception of the church underwent a dramatic transition.⁸² Under the influence of Bucer, he began to articulate a doctrine of the 'visible church', eventually eclipsing his original description of the church as the community of the elect. However, Bucer's tenacious insistence that the church is primarily the body of Christ found only a weak echo in Calvin. While he occasionally uses this language, frequently associating it with Ephesians 4, it appears incidentally rather than as the centre-piece

⁷⁹ Stephens (1994), 47-8, 50, 56; Willem van 't Spijker, *The Ecclesiastical Offices in the Thought of Martin Bucer* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 62.

⁸⁰ Irena Backus, 'Bucer's commentary on the Gospel of John', in D.F. Wright, ed. (1994), 61, 71.

⁸¹ van 't Spijker (1996), 66-7, 80, (1994), 35.

⁸² The expansion of Calvin's treatment of the church is illustrated by the CR edition of the *Institutes*. The 1536 material occupies three pages: 29: 72-8. In 1539, this grew to twenty-five pages; material occupying a further eleven pages was added in 1543; 29: 537-61, 561-72.

of his ecclesiology. Whereas Martyr adopted Bucer's terminology of the body and made frequent use of it, Calvin's focus lay elsewhere. Similarly, Martyr did not normally describe the distinction between the communion of saints and the church on earth in the invisible-visible categories which became Calvin's trademarks. Although they were to agree on union with Christ, the correspondence of their expressions of the nature of the church itself was less close.⁸³

Martyr distinguished the church as the body of Christ from the earthly institution, but he did not normally speak of the distinction in terms of invisibility and visibility.⁸⁴ In this he differed not only from Calvin but also from the theologian with whom, after Bucer's death, he was to develop the greatest partnership: Heinrich Bullinger. In the first sermon of the fifth Decade, published in 1551, and entitled 'Of the Holy Catholic Church', Bullinger followed this distinction between invisible and visible church.⁸⁵ It is the word of God which makes the church, but the church exists under these two aspects: the invisible church, composed of the elect, and the visible church of all professors of Christian faith. The former he does refer to as the body of Christ: Bullinger teaches that the Spirit joins Christ to us 'that he may live in us and we in him. . . . We are tied to him in mind and faith, as the body to the head'. Only true members of Christ have this 'knot and bond', which also joins them to each other.⁸⁶ Although he does not use the language of the body as extensively as Martyr and Bucer, he does not differ significantly in its conception. However, his thought has other distinctives which are absent from Martyr, notably his reintroduction of the traditional distinction between the church triumphant and the church militant. The former is exclusively heavenly, invisible and undivided; but the church militant has a dual aspect, being both visible and invisible. This development, as Bromiley notes, tends to obscure the unity which exists between the elect on earth and the company of the redeemed in heaven, implicitly ascribing an incomplete ecclesiological membership to believers in their earthly life.⁸⁷ Martyr was well-informed about the Zürich churches, and in his time in England was close to John Hooper, a determined advocate of its simplicity and order.

⁸³ Wendel (1950/1965), 294-7; CR 29: 524-5, 556-7, 601-2, 680, 694-5; 30: 746-7. *Inst.*, II.15.2, III.20.19, 24, IV.1.2, 2.6, 6.9.

⁸⁴ In the *De schismate* scholion, Martyr holds the church to be present when the word is openly preached and the sacraments soundly administered. However, he denies that the church itself must be visible, since faith is not evident to the eye. *Mel*, 111^v, 113^r; *PML* 1: 217, 223.

⁸⁵ *Zwingli and Bullinger*, ed. G.W. Bromiley, LCC 24 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953), 283-325.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 305.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 285-6.

However, his ecclesiology does not reveal a marked affinity with Bullinger's position, nor as we shall see with the identification of the visible church with the civic community which Zwingli and his successor had embraced.

The Church and the Word

Una semplice dichiarazione

The Apostles' Creed afforded Martyr no obvious opportunity to outline his doctrine of revelation. Convictions over the centrality of the word inform his exposition of the article on the church, but are not its principal focus. Nevertheless, the work as a whole does provide indications of the direction of his subsequent thought.

The members of the body of Christ, Martyr writes, are bound together for mutual edification. The church is accordingly endowed with means appropriate to this end:

They are bound together for no other end than to edify one another as much as possible, like bodily members whose coordination makes for mutual aid and preservation. [. . .] This body has its weapons, which are spiritual and not carnal: the word and the Spirit. With these, it overcomes and casts to the ground human cleverness, brings captive the senses, intellects, and minds of men to Jesus Christ, but does not subject people to tyrannical slavery and intolerable burdens.⁸⁸

This correlation of word and Spirit is not elaborated, though it anticipates his subsequent emphasis on God gathering people into Christ 'through the word and the Holy Spirit'.⁸⁹ In introducing the first of the fourfold means of the church's growth Martyr hints at the distinction between these two weapons:

Beyond grace, faith, and the Spirit within as well as the Scripture without, we need the admonitions and expositions which in contemporary Christendom are so deplorably neglected.⁹⁰

The leaders of the church of his day, he notes, 'cut back from the main meal, which is

⁸⁸ USD, 124-5; PML 1: 62.

⁸⁹ LC IV.1.1; Cor 5^r.

⁹⁰ USD, 131; PML 1: 64.

the word of God'.⁹¹ These comments receive some expansion in the article on the forgiveness of sins. Absolution comes by the 'grace and Spirit of Christ', and is received by faith. To accept the offer of forgiveness involves the inward work of the Spirit, 'who moves the soul within men', enabling them both to recognise God's mercy and joyfully to accept it. However, 'this ordinarily happens in connection with hearing the word of God'. Martyr cites the conversion of Cornelius in Acts 10, as well as Romans 10.17, in support.⁹² The offer of forgiveness is thus extended 'from without through the words of Scripture', and in this way the grace and Spirit of Christ 'enter the soul through the channel of attentive ears'.⁹³ Martyr does not deny the Spirit's freedom, but it is normally through the word that he works.

Here the outlines of Martyr's doctrine of word and Spirit are already visible. In the *Una semplice dichiarazione* they appear in the context of discussions of the church's ministry rather than its nature; in later writings this latter point receives more attention.

Subsequent works

Though Martyr's most extensive treatment of the relationship between the word and the church is found in the 1566 *De schismate* scholion, many of his assumptions are already apparent in earlier works: the commentaries on I Corinthians and Romans, his works on the eucharist, and some of his published sermons.⁹⁴ We have seen how the I Corinthians commentary describes the church as a company of believers gathered by God in Christ by means of the word and the Spirit. The work is prefaced by a lengthy introduction on the 'dignity and usefulness' of the Scriptures.⁹⁵ They are defined as: 'a certain expression of the wisdom of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and afterwards sealed in writing by faithful men as a remembrance'.⁹⁶ They are properly understood

⁹¹ USD, 126; PML 1: 63.

⁹² Romans 10.17: So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.

⁹³ USD, 148-51; PML 1: 69-70.

⁹⁴ Martyr's commentary on Romans was published in 1558 in Basel, but dates from his Oxford ministry, as is evident from references within the work to the situation in England (eg, *Rom*, 19: Hic in Anglia concionantur quidem interdum Episcopi, sed rarius quam oporteat). His correspondence indicates that he had hoped to publish from England: Martyr to Bullinger, 26 Oct 1551, ET, 328, OL II, 499.

⁹⁵ *Cor*, 1^r-3^v; PMR, 67-79.

⁹⁶ *Cor*, 1^r: Expressio quaedam sapientiae Dei, afflata sancto Spiritu, piis hominibus, deinde monumentis, literisque consignata.

Christologically. Christ's own testimony confirms that they are exclusively concerned, Old as well as New Testament, with him. The faith of believers in both testaments hence has the same object, namely Christ, in the promises of God. They accordingly share in the same communion. The 'two covenants' differ not in their substance, but only in their circumstances, conditions and ceremonies. However, whereas the Spirit now flourishes in abundance, under the old covenant he was less evident. A further difference is in the *locus* of the church. The church of God was the ancient people of Israel; Israelites were not excluded from election. But today the people who were once gathered into one nation are scattered round the whole world.⁹⁷

This continuity of divine revelation is also apparent in Martyr's treatment of the relationship of law and gospel. The division is a significant one. In the Judges commentary he suggests that it provides a basic hermeneutical key:

I would rather think as the learned sort do also judge, that whatsoever things are contained in the holy scriptures should be referred unto the two principal heads, the law I mean and the gospel. For everywhere are declared unto us the precepts of God of upright living, or when we are reprov'd to have strayed from them by reason of the weakness or else of malice, the gospel is laid forth before us, wherein by Christ that thing wherein we have offended is pardoned, and the strength and power of the Holy Ghost promised us, to reform us again to the image of God, which we had lost. These two things may we behold in all the books of Moses, in the histories, prophets, and books appointed to wisdom, and that not only in the Old Testament, but also in the new,⁹⁸

The law-gospel antithesis runs through both Old and New Testaments. In both, the gospel is the instrument of salvation, and the source of comfort and assurance for believers. Its character is one of promise, while the law's is one of moral demand. This means the law functions in several ways. In respect of men, it reveals sin, imposes penalties, and thereby drives the elect to Christ. However, following regeneration, it

⁹⁷ *Cor*, 3^r; *PMR*, 76-77; *Rom*, 376-77, *Romans*, 247^v; *Sam*, 250^r.

⁹⁸ *Judges*, 1^r; *Iud*, 1^r.

regains an edificatory function, and its precepts are willingly obeyed by believers.⁹⁹

Martyr normally equates the 'word of God' with Scripture.¹⁰⁰ In a Corinthians common place on the nature of faith, he comments that the word of God which is believed is 'twofold, written and not written'. But the two are not different. The unwritten word, the gospel of Christ or the promise of forgiveness which is believed, is the sum or chief point of the whole of the written word.¹⁰¹ Martyr can accordingly refer to the Scriptures, the 'sacred books', as 'the instruments of our salvation'. Their significance comes not from any splendour as literature: God's way is to use 'mean and lowly instruments', such as the sacraments and 'uncultured or barbarous' words. The power of the cross, rather than rhetorical sophistication, is what fits them to be 'instruments of the Holy Spirit'.¹⁰²

The relationship the Church has with the word is described in the Corinthians preface, in the context of a discussion of how the truth of the Scriptures can be discerned. The Holy Spirit and the word itself are the two tokens (*insignia*) for this task. The Spirit is

⁹⁹ *Cor*, 3^v: Lex est doctrina, de expetendis et fugiendis, autoritate Dei tradita. Cuius opus est multiplex. Voluntatem Dei ostendere. Transgressionem prodere et accusare. Iram Dei patefacere. Poenas et damnationem infligere, atque his rationibus electos Dei ad Christum impellere, qui sibi initiatos per fidem, cum ad se accesserint regeneratione concessa ad voluntatem Dei exequendam reducit, prout in lege nobis facienda proponitur. Largitur enim spiritum, et voluntatem, quae a praeceptis Dei abhorrebat, in ea facit esse propensam; *PMR*, 78-9.

The *Loci Communes* includes further extracts on the law and the gospel, and the relationship of the testaments, notably extracts from Kings (*An Dei mandatum sic expositum in hac vita servari queat, aut haec de usu et abrogatione legis*), Judges (*De similitudine et dissimilitudine veteris et novi foederis*), and Romans 4.18; *LC* II.15, 16, III.3.

¹⁰⁰ *CP* 13, *PML* 5: 254 (Sermon on Haggai 1): The word of God we have solely in the Scriptures of God.

¹⁰¹ *Cor*, 185^f: Assentiendum vero est verbo Dei, quod est duplex: scriptum, et non scriptum. Nam quae Deus prophetis loquebatur, prophetae crediderunt, quae tamen ab aliis ante ipsos scripta non erant. Abraham credidit se benedicendum, ita ut omnes Gentes in semine ipsius benedictionem assequerentur. Credidit item obediendum Deo, quando filius ad sacrificium poscebatur. Nil tamen huiusmodi scriptum legerat. Quod itaque diximus de fide, nequaquam illis adversatur, qui dicunt eam esse assensum Evangelio Christi exhibitum, seu divinae misericordiae nobis per Christum donatae, seu remissioni peccatorum nobis per eundem oblatae. Quoniam haec in verbo Dei summa sunt et praecipua, ad quae diriguntur lex, prophetae, minae, promissiones et historiae, quotquot habentur in sacris literis. Unde nequaquam ab illis discedo. Sed quae ipsi complexi sunt Evangelio et remissione peccatorum per Christum, ego quoque in verbo Dei contineri statuo.

¹⁰² Martyr uses these expressions in the Oxford address, *Encomium Verbi Dei in Scripturis Traditi, et ad harum studium adhortatio*, *LC* 1052-6; *PML* 5: 287-99.

vital, for without the faith which he creates, the Scriptures remain obscure. Those who through his work are adopted as sons are enabled by his continual help to hear Christ's voice in the Scriptures. The Spirit helps the believer to learn from them. He is their teacher, and accompanies the work of human teachers. Indeed, without his work, Scripture is 'the letter that kills'. However, his role does not preclude exegetical endeavour. The more obscure parts of the word of God are clarified by comparison with other parts. The role of the church is to assist in this process. It is not 'the supreme critic' but can establish a consensus on the meaning of passages and reveal 'the analogy of the other passages', by which some are accepted as the criteria for interpreting others.

This leads Martyr into a discussion of the church's authority in relation to Scripture. Though under the guidance of the Spirit the church had distinguished the canon from the apocryphal books, this discernment does not imply that the church itself is Scripture's authoritative interpreter. The church is not superior to Scripture, but submits to its teaching. Moreover, since it comprises humanity, the church, like its Fathers and Councils, is susceptible to error. Its judgments are to be adopted only if they concur with the 'sacred writings'.¹⁰³ Commenting on Romans 10, Martyr explains that the church does not have 'dominion' over faith. Rather, its office is simply to 'lay the Scriptures before men's eyes', because it is the word which is the Spirit's instrument in bringing faith. Its ministry is to preach, warn, correct, and to bear witness to those things that have been revealed by God.¹⁰⁴ Election, Martyr argues in introducing Romans 9, is the 'fountain of salvation'. It is effected through the word; together, they are the grounds of the church. Thus the word of God is offered to all as a general promise, but takes effect only in the elect. The church is primarily concerned with the universal offer, which is accomplished in those known to God's counsel.¹⁰⁵

Martyr uses the language of the keys to explain this. On Romans 11.27, Martyr describes the keys of the church as the word and faith. Both have been bequeathed by Christ:

For in the word of God is set forth unto men the promise of God,

¹⁰³ *Cor*, 2^r-2^v; *PMR*, 72-4; *PML* 5: 296-7. On Scripture and the gospel as a 'killing letter' without the Spirit's work, see *LC* 1050, *PML* 5: 285; also *Rom*, 291, *Romans*, 192^r. For a discussion of Martyr's use of the concept of analogy in theology, McLelland (1957), 79-83.

¹⁰⁴ *Rom*, 478-9, *Romans*, 326^{r-v}.

¹⁰⁵ *Rom*, 360-1, 374-5, *Romans*, 236^v-237^v, 246^v-247^r.

whereby through faith in Christ sins are forgiven, and he which believes not, shall be condemned, and his sins shall be imputed unto him. This is one key which the Church uses, whilst in it is both publicly and privately preached the word of God. The other key is faith, for if any hear, and give their assent unto these things which are set forth unto them, they have remission of sins.¹⁰⁶

In a sermon on John 20.19-23 of similar date, Martyr develops this concept. The keys are a metaphor for the means of release from our sins. Repeatedly he emphasises, 'the keys are the word of God'. He describes the 'twofold key' of the word by which souls are liberated. One is the preaching of the word; the other, believing the heard message. The Holy Spirit is active in both: 'the word of God is breathed by the Holy Spirit; partly when preached, partly when believed'. One key is for teaching, the other for believing, and the Holy Spirit is the author of both 'because there is neither good preaching nor right believing without his help'. All believers accordingly have the keys, since all have the Spirit of God, even though, as regards their external function, not all should preach or administer the sacraments, on the grounds of order.¹⁰⁷

In the *De schismate* scholion Martyr's treatment of the church and the word arises in defence of the reformers' claim to the right to judge the church according to the word. His purpose was to defend the reformed churches for their separation from the Roman hierarchy. He sets out to answer the criticism that it was illegitimate for the reformers to make Scripture the criterion of judgment over the church. His doctrine is accordingly deployed apologetically and polemically to vindicate the reformed position. Martyr repudiates the view that the existence of the church before the inscription of revelation meant that it takes precedence over the Bible. The dating of the Scriptures is besides the point, 'since the essence of revelation is the same regardless of its form'. Further, 'since the Church is gathered by the word of God, it must of necessity be subsequent to that word'. The argument is similar to his previous description of the *duplex verbum* in I Corinthians, and follows that work's understanding of the word as God's instrument in calling men and women into the Church.¹⁰⁸ Later in the scholion he extends this argument: the true church is 'circumscribed by the word of God, which is its infallible rule and immovable foundation'.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ *Rom*, 534, *Romans*, 361^v.

¹⁰⁷ *LC* 1048; *PML* 5: 231-3.

¹⁰⁸ *Mel*, 103^v; *PML* 1: 178-9. Martyr specifically responds to the criticisms of Stanislaus Hosius, bishop of Ermeland, the author of *Verae, christianae catholicaeque doctrinae solida pugnatio* (Cologne, 1558), of which Martyr owned a copy; Donnelly (1976a), 216.

¹⁰⁹ *Mel*, 105r; *PML* 1: 185.

The superior authority of the word is also attested from its freedom from error. The Scriptures can be trusted as divine: the 'ancients' have testified to their authenticity, and this external witness is augmented by the internal persuasion accomplished by the Holy Spirit. The church on the other hand lacks this infallibility. The history and enactments of its synods and councils is sufficient demonstration: on matters of doctrine they have diverged from one another. Further, the conduct of such synods was often scandalous. Martyr concludes: 'What standard remains? None whatsoever, apart from the word of God. By that criterion must the decisions of the Church and its councils be evaluated'. Martyr does not deny that the Spirit can teach through the church as well as through the Scriptures. But the two cannot be in opposition, and the latter have the supreme authority since they alone are infallible. This was the formal position, he asserts, of the early church in its councils.¹¹⁰

The scholion also addresses the question of the definition of the canon. The church's discernment of the canon does not imply its superior authority. Just as a scholar, less learned than Virgil, is nevertheless able to distinguish counterfeit verses from genuine, so the church was able to discern the divine authorship of the canonical Scriptures. Moreover, as was evident from the longstanding practice of appealing to the Scriptures in support of their decrees, the divine authority of the canonical books was recognised before any council formally listed them.¹¹¹

The authority which the Roman church assumed over Scripture was thus a novel claim. The Fathers never sought to exercise authority over the word. When Constantine inaugurated the Synod of Nicaea, he instructed the church to settle its Christological controversy on biblical principles: 'Nor did anyone complain that the emperor derogated from the dignity of the Church in any way when he thought that it should be ruled by the Scriptures'.¹¹² The church's role as the 'pillar and ground of the truth' in I Timothy 3 is thus conditional on its fidelity to Scripture. Martyr is sensitive to the suggestion that Augustine had given the church priority over the word. He argues that Augustine's meaning, in commenting 'I would not believe the gospel if the authority of the Church had not helped to move me', was that without the church he would not have heard the gospel. The word will not be heard without the church. Nevertheless, the church is not the 'whole cause' of faith. Further, when the church goes beyond the word

¹¹⁰ *Mel*, 104^r; *PML* 1: 180-1.

¹¹¹ *Mel*, 104^v; *PML* 1: 182-3.

¹¹² *Mel*, 105^r; *PML* 1: 185.

it is in error, and the 1 Timothy 3 verse is no defence or authority in such a case.¹¹³

The arguments Martyr advances in the *De schismate* scholion in support of his contention that the reformers are justified in seeking to reform the church by Scripture are not novel, but are built on foundations already visible in his earlier works. The word is the instrument of the gracious divine work of bringing men and women to Christ, uniting them with him and with one another. The church draws its life and its authority from the word, as the Spirit's instrument, and will be restored only by the medicine of the word.¹¹⁴

Martyr in context

Martyr's understanding of the word as the instrument of the Spirit situates his thought close to that of Bucer and Calvin. His identification of the Bible with the word of God, together with the relationship he posits between the testaments and the continuing role of the law in the life of the church, confirms this judgment.

Indeed, his defence of the supremacy of Scripture over the church is unexceptional. The reformers were united in their repudiation of Roman claims that the church has authority over the Bible. However, where differences arose among them, Martyr is normally aligned with the positions adopted by the nascent Reformed tradition, where Luther's law-gospel antithesis and identification of the word with Christ were significantly modified. Its articulation of the Spirit's work in relation to church and believer, and related conception of the word as his instrument, find parallels in Martyr. Further, like Bucer and Calvin, but unlike Luther, for Martyr the word not only creates and sustains faith but is also prescriptive of right living.¹¹⁵

His understanding of the continuity of the people of God between old and new

¹¹³ *Mel*, 104^r-105^r; *PML* 1: 182, 186; Augustine, *Contra epistolam Manichaei quam vocant Fundamenti*, 5, *PL* 42: 176: Ego vero evangelio non crederem nisi me catholicae ecclesiae commoveret auctoritas.

¹¹⁴ *LC* 1056; *PML* 5: 298.

¹¹⁵ On the the reformers' positions on Scripture, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *Reformation of Church and Dogma, 1300-1700* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1984), 183-217; T.F. Torrance, *Kingdom and Church* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1956), *passim*; on Bucer, see W.P. Stephens, *The Holy Spirit in the Theology of Martin Bucer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 133-41.

covenants echoes Bucer's position that the New Testament simply brings more revelation of the same God and the same faith. Their relationship is not one of law to gospel or letter to spirit: both affirm one nation of believers, before and after Christ. The Spirit is more active and widespread, but his work is unchanged: to create and sustain faith. There are also similarities between Bucer and Martyr in their understanding of the relationship of word and Spirit. Like Martyr, Bucer stresses that the church cannot give faith or understanding. Its preaching of the word is ineffective without the accompanying work of the Spirit. He is the inward teacher, the preacher the outward. Though the Spirit may work apart from the word, it is his normal means of creating faith.¹¹⁶

Martyr does not ascribe to the Spirit the government of the church in the same terms as Calvin had in his *Letter to Sadoleto*. Rather, word and Spirit are normally understood as instrument and agent of divine government. Nevertheless, Calvin's understanding of the unity of word and Spirit in the church's life is similar to Martyr's. In both, the word is the chosen instrument of the Spirit's work in creating and maintaining order in the church.¹¹⁷

Finally, Martyr's position on the role of the law corresponds with that of his Strasbourg and Geneva contemporaries. His conviction that, for the regenerate, the precepts of the law shape their willing obedience situates him in the tradition which saw law as the gospel's ethical counterpart, rather than its permanent antithesis. For Bucer, law provided the contours for the life of the community of love created by the gospel. For Calvin, law and gospel together provide the means by which the image of God is restored in the church. Though Martyr's conception is not as developed, it shares this commitment to the continuing relevance of Old Testament precept and example to the life of the church, as the ethical material gathered in the *Loci Communes* abundantly reveals.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Stephens (1970), 108-24, 196-212.

¹¹⁷ Torrance, 97-8; Pelikan (1984), 187-9; Milner, 4, *passim*.

¹¹⁸ Pelikan (1984), 211-4; Torrance, 151-4.

The Marks of the Church

Introduction

The doctrine of the marks was the reformers' main response to the need to describe how the universal church, the church as the body of Christ, is discerned in space and time. Substituting this doctrine for the identification of the credal 'one, holy, catholic church' with the 'church of Rome', they developed the notion of marks to describe how the true church was manifest on earth. The word is the means by which the Spirit gathers and keeps the elect. Hence the marks identify the locus of this divine activity, and the concept is closely related to their doctrines of election and the word.

Kingdon argues that Martyr's distinctive contribution to Reformation ecclesiology lies in his delineation of three essential marks. In particular, his highlighting of the mark of discipline renders Martyr distinctive: 'It sets him apart in a significant way from Luther and Calvin and makes him a considerable influence in his own right, given the wide acceptance of this position among the Reformed by the seventeenth century'.¹¹⁹ In contending that the organising principle of the arrangement of book four of the *Common Places* reflects Martyr's emphasis on the marks, Kingdon's case is overstated. Masson's structure does not follow Martyr's typical order of word, sacrament and discipline, and its content is too wide-ranging to be accurately summarised under this rubric. Moreover, Martyr was not the first or only reformer to contend for a 'three-mark doctrine'. Nevertheless, Kingdon's principal thesis is well-founded. Martyr's consistency in commending a three-mark doctrine of the church was distinctive, and anticipated later developments. From his earliest writings, his ecclesiology constantly turns to the *notae ecclesiae*. His expression of this doctrine displays some development over time, and is always subordinate to his conception of the church as a spiritual body.

Una semplice dichiarazione

Though the terminology of marks is absent from this early treatise, the underlying concept is already well-formed. In the final paragraphs of his treatment of the church Martyr identifies the fourfold means of its maintenance, edification and growth. These

¹¹⁹ Kingdon (1979), 198-214.

are: 'admonitions and expositions', 'the use of the sacraments', 'brotherly correction', and 'good and wise arrangements' for the church's 'external activities'. These four means are described as how the church 'may be nourished, increased, and conserved'.¹²⁰ This is a significant emphasis: in 1544 they are not indicators of the authenticity of the church, but the means whose proper use ensures its health.

One indication that his thought had not achieved its final form is the inclusion of a fourth feature, in later works relegated to the category of changeable 'ecclesiastical laws'.¹²¹ Indeed, though the shape of his later formulation of the doctrine is heralded, its succinct expression is absent. This is related to his purpose: to set before his countrymen an evangelical vision of the church, and to compare it with the visible institution from which he had defected. It is thus the failure of preaching and exposition in the contemporary church which dominates his discussion, rather than his later emphasis on the need for healthy teaching. He draws the reader's attention to the priorities of the pope and bishops, pointing out their duty to minister,

Not with indulgences, papal bulls, and ceremonial benedictions, but with the divine word, diligent admonitions, and frequent corrections. By these the unbelieving are converted, indolent believers awakened, and fervent souls consoled. These are the skills by which the Body of Christ is maintained.¹²²

His treatment of the sacraments displays a similar approach. The section begins, 'there must also be the use of the sacraments, but free and clean of human invention'. He laments their contamination by abuses such as the invocation of the saints, prayers for the dead, and the recitation of the Scriptures in Latin, and condemns idolatrous aspects of the Mass. His corrective prescription is brief though it concludes with an early example of his normal description of the sacraments:

The use of the sacraments is of great value to the church, since they are the *visible words* of God through the outward signs of water, bread and wine. These signs, like words, effectively portray to us the promises of God's mercy. Of these promises we actually partake, so that they are both necessary and salutary.¹²³

The nature and purposes of church discipline in Martyr will be fully discussed in

¹²⁰ USD, 131-46; PML 1: 64-9.

¹²¹ Chapter three, below, includes a discussion of Martyr's thought on this subject.

¹²² USD, 134; PML 1: 65.

¹²³ USD, 138-9; PML 1: 66, emphasis added.



chapter four. In his 1544 description, the focus falls on the disciplinary failures of the institutional church. The principal features of his later thought are not systematically developed. For instance, his terminology awaits its later precision. Though in discussing excommunication itself, he refers to 'discipline', the section begins: 'to the use of the sacraments should be added brotherly correction'.¹²⁴ The assumption throughout is that discipline is a necessary aspect of ministry, to be exercised particularly in the area of moral behaviour, to effect a separation of persistent evil-doers from the 'holy company of the believing'. Excommunication itself, which receives the most extensive treatment, is a 'most useful medicine' with a threefold purpose. First, it spares the church from the accusation of tolerating disease and upholds Christ's teaching on the Christian's lifestyle. Second, it protects the 'weak little sheep' from bad example. And third, it may lead the impenitent to their senses. It should be exercised by 'the whole church gathered together, where the word of God is publicly preached'.¹²⁵ The competence of a local assembly of believers to exercise this discipline autonomously was to remain a distinctive feature of his mature thought.

According to Kingdon, it was only after 1544 that the reformers began to place discipline as one of the marks of the church, attributing this to Martyr's influence.¹²⁶ Though this claim calls for qualification, Martyr was certainly to become the most consistent exponent of a three-mark doctrine of the church. The evidence of the *Una semplice* suggests that by 1544 his thought was already well developed.

Subsequent works

Martyr's thought on the marks soon achieved its mature shape, and his definition became succinct and standard in its expression. Further, while they continue to be seen as the divine instruments of the church's growth and health, the marks are also understood to function as signs of the local presence of the universal church.

The I Corinthians commentary definition of the church includes the three marks in its final clause. God governs the church 'by purity of teaching, by lawful use of the sacraments, and by discipline'.¹²⁷ These three activities are now understood

¹²⁴ USD, 138-9; PML 1: 66.

¹²⁵ USD, 142; PML 1: 68.

¹²⁶ Kingdon (1979), 200.

¹²⁷ Cor 5^r, CP IV.1.1.

instrumentally, as the means by which God governs the company of believers. Further, they are primarily exercised by the church's ministers. The *locus* of the church, on the other hand, is not specified, though the sequel suggests that it is the church in its local manifestations which is Martyr's primary focus. This is related to the supplementary function which the marks now serve, as Martyr indicates in the same paragraph. The fact that the church is a universal spiritual body does not mean it can not be discerned on earth:

But if you will conclude hereby that the Church shall be unknown, we will deny it to be a firm conclusion, because there be proper marks assigned, by which the same may be very well known, and be discerned from profane conventicles. For wheresoever pureness of doctrine flourishes, the sacraments are purely ministered, and discipline is exercised, you have a congregation whereunto you may safely join yourself, although the honesty of every particular man is not sufficiently known unto you.¹²⁸

The three instruments of divine rule, now described as 'marks', are the means by which the true church may be identified, in its local manifestation, by an individual believer, as the use of the second person singular indicates. Though the mention of 'profane conventicles' might suggest that Martyr is concerned to distinguish the reformed churches from Anabaptist communities as much as from the Roman hierarchy, the argument of the chapter as a whole suggests that it is a reference to the latter. Indeed, the marks of the church were not the main point of difference between the ecclesiologies of the reformers and their radical brethren: in Strasbourg, Bucer had sought to win over Anabaptists by offering reassurances that the leadership of the church there was serious about practising an effective discipline.¹²⁹

Martyr also contrasts these marks with misleading indicators. Visible holiness is not an appropriate sign. Only God knows the heart, and so to judge the church on the basis of profession or the purity of life of its members is to seek a knowledge which men lack. While it is right for open sinners to be disciplined, to demand that the church be perfect

¹²⁸ *Cor* 5f: Quod si concludere hinc velis, Ecclesiam fore ignotam, negabimus firmam esse connexionem: quia propriae notae assignantur, quibus optime dignosci possit, et a prophanis conciliabulis secerni. Quoniam ubicunque puritas doctrinae viget, sacramenta pure administrantur, et disciplina exercetur, coetum habes cui te possis tuto adiungere, quanquam singulorum probitas, non satis tibi comperta sit.

¹²⁹ Burnett, 70-1. For a discussion of the influence of anabaptist pressure on Bucer, Kenneth R. David, 'No Discipline, No Church: An Anabaptist Contribution to the Reformed Tradition', *SCJ* 13 (1982), 49-52.

is to mistake its character on earth: only on 'the day of Christ' will the church be 'without spot or wrinkle'. However, if the presence of the signs indicates the existence of the true church, their absence reveals the reverse. A church lacking these marks, however prestigious or distinguished, forfeits the right to be considered a true church. Christ has not bound himself to 'successions and sees'.¹³⁰

The doctrine of the marks thus becomes the criterion for distinguishing the ecclesiologically authentic and spurious, and hence a means of defending the increasingly irreconcilable separation of the reformers from the Roman church. Commenting on I Corinthians 10, for example, discipline is crisply defined. It is 'nothing else than a power granted to the church by God, by which the will and actions of the faithful are made conformable to the law of God'.¹³¹ The relationship between discipline and the word is significant. The instrument is not a separate operation of divine government, but like the 'visible words' of the sacraments is one of the means by which the church is ruled by the word. As we shall see in chapter four, the breadth of Martyr's conception of discipline is striking. It comprises teaching and warning as well as correction and punishment as part of the regimen by which the lives of believers are conformed to the precepts of Scripture.¹³² Discipline relates primarily to behaviour, and though commanded by Christ is concerned with the 'divine law'. It is the church's means of encouraging this new obedience, and hence is a ministry of the word applied to the lives of believers.

The doctrine of the marks became Martyr's shorthand means of defining the church. One example is his lengthy letter, *De Fuga in Persecutione*, written as an apology for his own flight from Italy as well as his contribution to an emerging debate among the reformers over 'Nicodemism'. Here he turns to the marks to refute the argument that believers should remain in countries where the Reformation is being suppressed:

I do not see how I can concede that visible churches have been set up in those regions, founded on good regulations, in which the pure teaching

¹³⁰ *Cor*, 5^r; *LC* IV.1.1-2.

¹³¹ *Cor*, 132^v: Paulus autem disciplinam retinebat quam diligentissime: quae nihil aliud est, quam facultas Ecclesiae, divinitus concessa, qua voluntas et actiones fidelium reddantur conformes divinae legi: quod fit doctrina, monitionibus, correctione, demumque poenis, et si opus fuerit excommunicatione. *LC* IV.5.1

¹³² *Ibid.*

of Christ is proclaimed, the sacraments rightly administered, and some form of discipline is in place.¹³³

If, as is most likely, the letter dates from the mid-1540s, it affords the first example of Martyr's use of the marks (though this vocabulary is absent) as the criteria for discerning the local presence of the authentic church, and reveals that this conception of the marks was already formed before Martyr left Strasbourg.¹³⁴

Martyr's doctrine of the marks was well-known by the time he penned the *De schismate* scholion. The work suggests, however, that he came to recognise the priority of word and sacrament over discipline. When he turns to the marks, his emphasis falls on their role as the criteria of authenticity. Some of his expressions are novel. In the course of enumerating thirteen 'just causes' of the reformers' separation are defended, he posits that three sorts of things are to be distinguished in the churches: the necessary, the optional and the evil. The necessary elements include

doctrine and the administration of the sacraments, in addition to a holy and virtuous life, so that in their relationship to God and one another, people may live piously, modestly and justly. All this relates to discipline.¹³⁵

The marks are here a benchmark by which the legitimacy of the church is judged. The Roman denial of justification by faith alone, teaching of justification by works, image-worship and prayers for the dead are cited as examples of the corruption of doctrine. The sacraments have been deformed 'with so many additions and subtractions'. Moreover, 'as regards daily living, they have relaxed the bridle of discipline'. These points are not developed further: Martyr regards their truth as self-evident, and the criteria of the marks as sufficient.

Later in the scholion he argues that they are specifically found in Scripture. Ephesians 5.25-27 provides his key text. The 'washing of water with the word', he argues, refers to 'the outward word and the sacraments'. These are required in addition to the

¹³³ LC 1080; PML 5: 85. The letter was first printed in the *Loci Communes* (1583).

¹³⁴ PML 1: 21-2, discusses the date of this letter, and relates it to the debate stimulated by Calvin's 1544 *Excuse . . . a Messieurs les Nicodemites*, CR 34: 589.

¹³⁵ *Mel*, 103^r: In ecclesia tria sunt rerum genera. Nam quaedam necessaria sunt, alia vero liberae, nonnullae vitiosae. Inter necessaria constituuntur, doctrina, et sacramentorum administratio, necnon sancta et honesta vita, nempe ut homines erga Deum, erga seipsos et proximos pie, modeste, ac iuste se gerant, quod utique totum ad disciplinam spectat. PML 1: 175.

inward purification of remission of sins and spiritual regeneration. The 'disciplines of a holy life' are indicated by the reference to Christ's intention 'that he might present the church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle'.¹³⁶

This represents a fresh attempt in Martyr to find a specific New Testament sanction for the reformers' approach to the marks. In the *Una semplice dichiarazione* and in the I Corinthians commentary he had appealed to this verse in support of the contention that of the two sacraments it is baptism which expressly signifies the remission of sins.¹³⁷ In *De schismate*, the passage is enlisted to sustain the whole doctrine of the marks, as Martyr begins to refute the Roman contention that they are not appropriate marks of true churches. However, Martyr does not develop the argument, preferring to offer his own critique of the counter-proposal, at much greater length.¹³⁸

This pattern recurs in the third, final part of the treatise, where he argues that the reformers have returned to the church rather than left it. The foundation of the church is the word of God, which he opposes to 'the sand of human traditions'. It is the church as the body of Christ, composed of living members, which is the focus of Martyr's defence. His appeal to the marks now focuses on the first two:

Human traditions have adulterated the pure word of God and the administration of the sacraments. As traditions increased, the power of the sacraments and sound doctrine was diluted. Finally, the things in which the Church chiefly consists went up in smoke and disappeared.¹³⁹

Enumerating the features of the church from which the reformers have separated, Martyr employs the doctrine of the marks, together with his repudiation of papal headship, in his critique. It is the Roman church's substitution of human traditions for the word of God, its attribution of the keys to human authority instead of the proclamation of the gospel, and the corruption of the sacraments, which justify separation: 'We have withdrawn from those who have lost the way and we have taken the highway of truth, that we might walk in it'.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ *Mel*, 105^v; *PML* 1: 187

¹³⁷ *Cor*, 141^r; *PML* 1: 71.

¹³⁸ *Mel*, 105^v-107^r; *PML* 1: 188-200.

¹³⁹ *Mel*, 112^r; *PML* 1: 218.

¹⁴⁰ *Mel*, 112^v-113^r; *PML* 1: 220-2.

Martyr's final reference to the marks in this work arises as he distinguishes the doctrinal disorder in the Roman church from the moral disorder of Corinth. Despite its divisions and sins, the Corinthian church was authentic, on account of its possession of two marks:

Within the church of Corinth God's word was still openly preached and the sacraments were soundly administered. Even though many were infected with grave corruptions and sins, yet they had not all defected from the faith or abandoned holiness. For this reason the Church continued to exist in Corinth. When the two factors I have mentioned are soundly maintained, that is, the word and the sacraments, they never fail to produce some fruit and constitute assured signs and marks of the true Church.¹⁴¹

This treatment indicates that Martyr's preference for a 'three mark' expression of the doctrine was not absolute. Word and sacrament had a functional priority in his thought. When these are present, they are productive of the 'fruit' of holy living which is supplementary evidence for the presence of the true church.

Martyr in context

In his thought on the marks, Martyr trod a distinctive route, traversing a number of common features without following precisely in the footsteps of any single contemporary. This is scarcely surprising: though most reformers accepted the concept of the *notae ecclesiae*, their articulation varied.

It was Luther's rejection of Roman authority which had reopened the question of where the true church was to be found. Luther himself was in no hurry to answer it. His reluctance to define the church in its visible aspect flowed from his radical insistence on the church as the communion of believers, created by the word, though he was prepared to teach that the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments were 'signs', indicating the presence of true Christians.¹⁴² The church exists wherever the word is preached and believed.¹⁴³ In his 1539 treatise *On the Councils and the Church*, he outlined seven marks, by which the presence of 'Christian holy people' can be discerned: the external word, preached, believed, and lived; both sacraments, rightly

¹⁴¹ *Mel*, 113r; *PML* 1: 223.

¹⁴² Strohl (1951), 178.

¹⁴³ Torrance, 55.

administered; the exercise of the keys; an ordered ministry; prayer, praise and thanksgiving; and, the mark of the cross. These are the 'seven principal parts of Christian sanctification or the seven holy possessions of the church'.¹⁴⁴ However, this was neither an exclusive nor a definitive list. These marks are indicative, and are all related to the primacy of the preached word, or more specifically the gospel itself, which for Luther was the constitutive element of the church: 'the sure mark by which the Christian congregation can be recognised is that the pure gospel is preached there'.¹⁴⁵

The development of the doctrine of the marks in Philip Melancthon's hands is instructive. The 1530 *Augsburg Confession* held that 'the church is the assembly of saints in which the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly'.¹⁴⁶ Later formulations added a number of refinements. The first mark became the *verbum Dei*, and subsequently *doctrina*, replacing the earlier insistence on the gospel itself, although the emphasis remained on the preached word rather than doctrinal orthodoxy. By 1543 Melancthon held that the church is a visible salvific institution, which could be identified by word and sacrament. In 1552, a further element is included: the church is a visible divine institution, founded on pure doctrine and the right administration of the sacraments, whose members recognise ministerial authority.¹⁴⁷ This duty of obedience to the ministry had emerged as early as 1533, reappeared in the 1559 *Examen Ordinandum*, and heralded an emphasis on discipline in his later writings: the 1555 edition of his *Loci Communes*, though its specific discussion of the marks restricts them to the gospel and sacraments, placed the ban alongside them as one of the three offices by which the church is understood to exist.¹⁴⁸

Martyr's arrival in Strasbourg in 1542 hence coincided with a growing concern among the reformers not only to identify the visible church, but also to order its life. This was associated with an increasing emphasis on obedience of life as the demonstration and fruit of true profession, exemplified by Bucer's insistence on the Christian life as one

¹⁴⁴ LW 41: 148-66, WA 50: 628-43.

¹⁴⁵ LW 39: 305; WA 11: 408.

¹⁴⁶ Est autem ecclesia congregatio sanctorum in qua evangelium recte docetur, et recte ministrantur sacramenta. Philip Schaff, *The History of the Creeds of Christendom* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1877), III, 11-12.

¹⁴⁷ Strohl, 204-5.

¹⁴⁸ CR 12: 433, 23:37; *Melancthon on Christian Doctrine: Loci Communes 1555*, ed. C.L. Manschreck (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 266, 272; Carl S. Meyer, 'Melancthon, Theologian of Ecumenism', *JEH* 17 (1966), 199-205.

lived for others.¹⁴⁹ Bucer's works also typify the era's fluidity in defining the marks. As early as 1528 he was teaching a three mark doctrine, by which the presence of a genuine *societas christianorum* in the mixed body of the church could be discerned.¹⁵⁰ By the early 1530s, as a result of conflict with the Anabaptists in Strasbourg, he was convinced that his vision of a Christian community characterised by mutual love required a structure which would encourage obedience. His 1538 *Von der Waren Seelsorge* hence defines the church as a community governed by the word, the sacraments, love and discipline.¹⁵¹ However, his definition of the marks varied with the requirements of his situation. In the 1540 *Regensburg Book*, they are defined as sound doctrine, right use of the sacraments, and the bond of love.¹⁵² At Worms, despite the reformers' contention that the restoration of discipline and pure doctrine were the two conditions for peace in Germany, Bucer omitted discipline from his definition of the church.¹⁵³ Yet in his 1551 Ephesians lectures, delivered in England, a local assembly of the universal church has distinct features:

It possesses the ministration of life and salvation, that is, the teaching of the word and the rightful use and dispensation of the sacraments, and it exercises that discipline which is commanded by Christ in the canonical Scriptures, and displays a life conformable to such discipline.¹⁵⁴

However, within a few pages, this description has been elaborated: the marks without which a church cannot exist now include right hearing, a ministry of teaching, the possession of suitable ministers, the sacraments, and righteousness of life.

In this context, Martyr's consistent inclusion of discipline as the third mark distinguishes his thought. He was not the first reformer to make discipline one of the marks, but the consistency of his approach is unusual. His resistance to include other elements as further marks is particularly striking. For example, neither ministry nor

¹⁴⁹ James Kittelson, 'Martin Bucer and the ministry of the church', in D.F. Wright, ed. (1994), 94; van 't Spijker (1996), 86-8.

¹⁵⁰ Gottfried Hammann, *Entre la Secte et la Cité: Le Projet de l'Eglise du Réformateur Martin Bucer* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1984), 173-8.

¹⁵¹ BDS 7: 238. See also the Latin translation *De Vera Animarum Cura*, in *Martini Bucer Scripta Anglicana fere omnia . . . a Con. Huberto . . . collecta* (Basel 1577), 265, 269-72.

¹⁵² Cornelius Augustijn, 'Bucer's ecclesiology in the colloquies with the Catholics, 1540-41', in D.F. Wright, ed. (1994), 111-2; see also J. Rott, 'The Strasbourg Kirchenpfleger', *ibid*, 122-8.

¹⁵³ Heiko A. Oberman, 'Europa Afflicta: The Reformation of the Refugees', *ARG* (1992), 98.

¹⁵⁴ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, ed. D.F. Wright, (Abingdon: Sutton Courtenay, 1972), 203.

holy living feature prominently in his definitions of the marks. A further distinctive feature of Martyr's doctrine relates to the function of the marks. As we noted, in the 1544 work, preaching, sacraments and discipline, alongside church government, are identified as the means of church growth and maintenance. It is only in the 1551 Corinthians commentary that they emerge as indicators of the church's presence; even here, it is alongside their role as the instruments of God's rule in the church. Though the marks are definitive of the church, they are also constitutive. For Martyr, the marks are signs of the church's presence, but also its means of conforming to the will of its lord.

Martyr's position is also distinct from Calvin's. Like Martyr, Calvin declined to follow Bucer in making the bond of love a mark of the church.¹⁵⁵ Discipline was, of course, a priority for him: he made his return to office in Geneva conditional on the implementation of a functioning ecclesiastical discipline.¹⁵⁶ However, despite his insistence on church discipline as an indispensable element of the church's ministry, his doctrine of the marks limited them to 'the word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to Christ's institution'.¹⁵⁷ These two are the outward manifestation of the communion with Christ enjoyed by all believers, and evidence of the local presence of Christ's universal rule over the elect; as in Luther, they reveal the presence of believers. Discipline, on the other hand, relates to the sanctification of church members. The two mark doctrine is taught in the 1536 *Institutes*, and despite the growing significance for Calvin in the following years of the visible church as the *mater fidelium*, and of discipline as the means of its preservation of its character as belonging to Christ, he never elevates it to the status of a mark.¹⁵⁸

Strohl observed that Calvin's attitude reflects his acute apprehension of the historical situation of the church of his day, assailed on the one hand by Anabaptist separatism, and on the other by the difficult circumstances of Protestant congregations in his native France.¹⁵⁹ The two marks are sufficient evidence to embrace a church; if these are

¹⁵⁵ An exception to this occurs in the 1541 *Ecclesiastical Ordinances*, where the true criteria of an authentic church are said to be sound doctrine and the practice of brotherly love; Strohl (1951), 219.

¹⁵⁶ On this, see for example Oberman (1992), 97-9.

¹⁵⁷ The definition originates in the 1536 *Institutes*, and in later editions they are said to have priority as the 'plainer marks'. They are, however, accompanied by 'a certain charitable judgment whereby we recognise as members of the church those who by confession of faith, by example of life, and by partaking of the sacraments, profess the same God and Christ with us'. CR 29: 77, 542-3; 30: 751-2; *Inst.*, IV.1.6, 8-9.

¹⁵⁸ Ganoczy (1966), 250, 252-3; Strohl (1951), 210; Oberman (1992), 98-102; Wendel (1965), 297-9.

¹⁵⁹ Strohl (1951), 218.

present, as signs of its 'outward communion', other imperfections must be tolerated.¹⁶⁰ In his Corinthians commentary on the other hand, Martyr declares that all three marks must be in place for a believer safely to join himself to a congregation.

Calvin's formulation also places more emphasis on the hearing and reception of word and sacrament than does that of Martyr. The word will bring forth fruit, and this is evidence of the presence of the church.¹⁶¹ Martyr's conception is less dynamic. In its mature formulation, he tends to refer to 'purity of doctrine' rather than preaching. It would be anachronistic to interpret this as referring to adherence to confessional standards rather than to the ministry of teaching: Martyr's own practise as a biblical exegete and preacher of Scripture reveals his own understanding of the phrase, as does his treatment of the issue in the *Una semplice dichiarazione*. Nevertheless, the origins of later Reformed emphasis on doctrinal orthodoxy as a mark of the church are more evident in Martyr, particularly since his formulation lacks the emphasis on believing response to the preached word which distinguishes Calvin's descriptions.

The Ministry of the Church

Martyr and Ministry

Martyr's thought on ministry primarily emerges in the I Corinthians commentary, from which Masson extracted most of the relevant *Loci Communes* material. Other passages were drawn from the works on Romans, Samuel and Kings. Martyr held firmly to the necessity for due order in the ministry itself: equality before God did not entail the right for all to exercise public ministry, and a good deal of his writing appears to be shaped by the need to respond to Anabaptist arguments, revealing his understanding on the relationship of the testaments and the difference between the church in extraordinary and ordinary times. In this section his understanding of the role of the ministry and ministerial vocation is examined; the next chapter will include a discussion of the relationship between ministry and the church's polity.

¹⁶⁰ CR 29: 544-5, 549-50 (1539, 1543); *Inst.*, IV.1.10-11, 19.

¹⁶¹ CR 29: 544; *Inst.*, IV.1.10. Article 18 of the 1536 *Genevan Confession* heralds this approach: we believe that the proper mark by which to discern the church of Jesus Christ is that his holy gospel be purely and faithfully preached, proclaimed, heard and kept, that his sacraments be properly administered, even if there be some imperfections and faults, as there always will be among men. *Confessions and Catechisms*, ed. Noll, 130-1.

In the *Una semplice dichiarazione*, some assumptions are already visible, though the treatment is brief. Martyr alludes to II Corinthians 10.3-8 to argue that 'the aim of apostolic authority is edification, not destruction'. Though the word and the Spirit, the 'spiritual weapons', pertain to the whole church, the example of the apostles is normative for its ministers themselves. His criticism of the traditional hierarchy is for its failure to exercise 'the principal and supreme apostolic duty' of preaching. This responsibility should not have been relegated to the mendicants, since it 'so definitely belongs to their episcopal office'. The duty of preaching, feeding, instructing and enriching the church should be fulfilled by its pastors and stewards.¹⁶² The church depends on this ministry since the general remission of sins is received by believers through the ministry of word and sacrament in the church.¹⁶³

The Corinthians commentary distinguishes Martyr's doctrine of the priesthood of all believers from his understanding of ministry. The *sacerdotium* and *regnum* which all believers share is a spiritual one, bestowed on all believers by Christ. Their priesthood consists in offering sacrifices: prayers, works, alms, mortification. The *regnum* which they are to exercise is over evil desires. But Anabaptist rejection of ministerial order on these grounds is mistaken. This common priesthood does not abrogate the need for ministry, and no believer can assume ministerial functions at his own volition.¹⁶⁴

Martyr distinguishes two divine 'vocations' in order to defend this point. Every Christian partakes in the 'general call' to obedience of life.¹⁶⁵ In the later commentary on Samuel, this is described as the call 'to justification, to life, to salvation'.¹⁶⁶ By virtue of this general vocation, every believer has a ministry of brotherly correction, of bearing witness, and, if he is the head of a household, of instructing the family. It is distinct from the second call, which is individual or particular, and is to function, position or office. This call is normally made by those to whom the office pertains: the magistrate,

¹⁶² USD, 125-34; PML 1: 62-4.

¹⁶³ USD, 147-53; PML 1: 69-71.

¹⁶⁴ Cor, 239^v.

¹⁶⁵ Cor, 239^{r-v}: Postremo volumus testatum, quendam esse vocationem generalem, quae omnibus est communis, et in omnibus his locum habet rebus, de quibus in lege Dei mandata extant; alia vero est vocatio privata, qua fidelium quisque proprio gradui, officio, statui ac functioni est addictus. Nullus quippe invenitur in Ecclesia Christi, qui non sit in aliqua privata vocatione collocatus.

¹⁶⁶ LC IV.1.13; Sam, 186^v: Dei autem illa immediate vocatio, vel generalis est, ut ad iustificationem, vitam, salutem: vel particularis, ut ad docendum, ad uxorem, ad magistratum gerendum. Sed quicquid est, statim est obtemperandum, postquam nos intelligimus Deo vocatos esse.

the people, or the leaders of the church. Ministry in the church is a species of this second type of call; it is accordingly for the church to call its ministers. The Scriptures provide that this order must be followed in ecclesiastical vocations. It is God who gives ministers to the church, as Ephesians 4 teaches. It is through God's order in the church that they are given. An individual acting *suo arbitrio* is not qualified to discern his call, and those who usurp ministerial functions are not placed in them by God.¹⁶⁷

Martyr acknowledges that the Scriptures contain examples of leaders, for example the prophets, who by these standards were 'irregular'. However, such leadership was not normative for the church of his day. Its circumstances were unusual, since the church was not yet built. Further, the prophets were sent by God *extra ordinem*; their ministry was unusual. Though their example is admirable, today the church is bound to the ordinary ministry which Scripture prescribes.¹⁶⁸

Though ministry is not one of the church's marks, it is necessary. Anabaptists who dispense with these God-given means of faith do not possess the true church. Further, the 'dignity' of ministers stems from their role. They are ministers of the remission of sins, reconciliation with God, and eternal life. As such, Martyr calls them 'organs and instruments of our faith' and therefore it is to God that their honour truly belongs.¹⁶⁹ Their ministry of teaching, for example, bears fruit only if the Spirit is at work in the hearers: it is he who 'fertilises' souls.¹⁷⁰

Commenting on I Corinthians 3.6, Martyr develops this understanding of ministry. Ministry involves the coupling of the work of the Holy Spirit with the work of ministers to forge a unity. This accounts for the way in which the work of one party is attributed to another: hence ministers can be described as 'productive'. A comparison is made with the sacraments: their efficacy is not in what they are but what they signify. Ministers ought therefore to pray that God's ministry would be effective in them by his

¹⁶⁷ *Cor*, 239^v.

¹⁶⁸ *Cor*, 239^v : Nos autem in praesentia non agimus nisi de ordinaria ministerii functione. Nam quae a Deo fiunt extra ordinem, admirari debemus, non autem semper imitari. Etenim praescriptae nobis leges quibus, parere debemus.

¹⁶⁹ *Cor*, 35^v: Si organa et instrumenta nostrae fidei esse statuantur, quis non eos et in honore, et in precio habeat? Anabaptistae ministros abiiciunt, atque contemnunt. Idcirco iustam ecclesiam hactenus non habuerunt. Non enim ea constare potest, neque divinus cultus publice retineri, si ratio ministrorum non habeatur.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*: Nam quantavis accurate quis doceat, nisi Spiritus sanctus audientes intus excitaverit, opera luditur. Spiritus est qui vere animos foecundat.

Spirit, and that they would be fit and suitable instruments.¹⁷¹

Martyr distinguishes his concept of ministry from a sacrificial model. Praise, confession, prayers, alms and the like are sacrificial, but the greatest sacrifice is that by which people are led to Christ. The notion that ministers offer Christ is absurd.¹⁷² Paul's image of the minister as the 'stewards of the mysteries of God' in I Corinthians 4.1 provides a more appropriate pattern. Ministers are servants of Christ and servants of his people, rulers of the churches between Christ and the people. A balance is to be observed in this intermediation. If too much honour is ascribed to the ministry, God's glory is obscured and tyranny looms. Too little, and the gospel comes into contempt. The task of ministry is therefore properly conceived as that of a steward of the household of God. The church, the family of Christ, includes the three component relationships - husband-wife, parent-child, master-slave - of Aristotle's *Politics*. The minister is accordingly to be understood as a household steward. He teaches and catechises, administers baptism as the sign of the family, instructs members in their vocation, teaches them to care for one another, and supplies the 'weapons' of the word of God and the eucharist.¹⁷³

The object of the minister's work is the restoration of the image of God in believers. Martyr relates this to the instruction to put off the old man and put on the new in Ephesians 4. The pastor has to accommodate his teaching to the capacity of the people, administering milk to some, solid food to others, according to their capacity. The purity of the household is another of his concerns. He is responsible for excluding offenders and receiving back the penitent.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ *Cor*, 37^r: At si eos cogites, quo Deo coniunguntur, et ipse in illis est efficax, atque Spiritus sancti actio cum ministrorum actione copulatur, ita ut ex illis duobus unum quoquo modo conflatur, tropo synecdoches, quod unius est partis, alteri attribuitur. Atque hoc pacto quem commemoravimus, ministri Ecclesiae dicuntur efficere.

A similar point is made on Romans 1.11 : God has so much honoured the ministry, that he also communicated even his own proper work unto the ministers. For as touching their functions, they are not separated from God, who is the author of them, but rather are to be joined with him, as though one and the self same work proceeded from them both. And after this manner are ministers said to forgive or to retain sins, to beget men into Christ and to save them;

Romans, 11^r.

¹⁷² *Cor*, 48^r.

¹⁷³ *Ibid*, 47^{r-v}, including: Ad haec quia bella imminent et tentationes, arma suppeditat, verbum Dei et cibo Eucharistiae, ad pugnam confirmat atque corroborat.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 47^v: Finis huius oeconomiae constituitur, ut in his qui ad familiam pertinent instauretur imago Dei, propter peccatum pene oblitterata.

As Christ's servant and steward the minister draws his resources exclusively from his master. He ought to give nothing to the household which he has not taken from 'the words of Christ and the holy Scriptures'.¹⁷⁵ Like the steward in the parable, bringing out things old and new from his store, he prepares the feast for Christ's flock, from both Old and New Testaments. It was Christ's own pattern to teach what he had received from his Father: he is the example as well as the authority for the minister. As his servants, they are wholly subject to him and are not lords or tyrants over the clergy or people of God, but *oeconomi et dispensatores*.¹⁷⁶

The character of the minister also attracts Martyr's attention. Faithful administration, he argues from I Corinthians 4.2, is more important than eloquence, nobility, grace or authority. From Matthew 25.23 he notes that Christ adds the requirement of prudence, and observes that in practice these two qualities, faithfulness and wisdom, are conjoined, occurring together. They are seen in the attitude the minister has to the pastoral task. He is to recognise that he is a public person. He is about God's work, he handles God's words and sacraments, and he serves those for whom Christ died. These considerations will determine the manner of his ministry.¹⁷⁷

Martyr is reluctant to specify further qualifications. Sanctity of life, in particular, is not a unique requirement: this obligation is common to all Christians. Towards the end of his treatment of I Corinthians 4.2, he sums up: three things are required for a church to have a legitimate ministry. First, the minister should have a 'just call'. Second, he must teach well. Finally, he should rule faithfully and wisely. These are the marks that both distinguish the minister from his fellow Christians, and indicate that the church possesses the ministry envisaged in Scripture.¹⁷⁸

Martyr does not describe in detail how the church should discern ministerial vocation. The criteria laid down in 1 Timothy 3 give the church its selection standards.¹⁷⁹ In the Corinthians scholion *De excommunicatione*, the most important decisions in the church

¹⁷⁵ *Cor*, 47^{r-v}: Quamobrem non aliunde accipiant oportet, quae nobis proponunt, quam a verbis Christi et sancta Scriptura.

¹⁷⁶ *Cor*, 47^v-48^v.

¹⁷⁷ *Cor*, 48^v.

¹⁷⁸ *Cor*, 49^r: Tria itaque requiruntur ad legitimum Ecclesiae ministerium: Primum est, ut iustam vocationem pastor habeat; deinde, ut reipsa pascat; denique, ut id fideliter et summa cum prudentia prestat

¹⁷⁹ *Cor*, 240^r.

are to be taken by the whole congregation. One of these is 'the choice of ministers'. He clearly expects the call to ministry to involve a wider circle than the congregational leaders.¹⁸⁰ In his later lectures on Samuel, with Anabaptist radicalism in his sights, Martyr simply states that the choice of ministers is a matter for the church. It is the church which has the responsibility of discerning not only a individual's heart for ministry, but also whether he has sufficient knowledge and ability for the task. In a reference which may reflect the local situation in Zürich, the power of objective discernment in selecting ministers is said to rest with either the church or the commonwealth.¹⁸¹

In the same work, Martyr defends the reformers' retention of laying on of hands, and their abandonment of more elaborate rites. This is consistent with Scripture: only the imposition of hands was required by the Pastoral Epistles.¹⁸² Commenting on 1 Samuel 7, he states that the rites prescribed by the law for the consecration of Levites and priests were shadows which have now been removed. The laying on of hands is the sole means of signifying ministerial status.¹⁸³ The succession which counts in the church is in apostolic doctrine, not episcopal ordination: the reformers have retained this more faithfully than their opponents.¹⁸⁴

Martyr in context

The outlines of Martyr's thought correspond to the conception of ministry which was emerging among the churches of his day. With most other mainstream reformers, he followed the outlines of Luther's redefinition of ministry and vocation, but qualified them with an emphasis on order, making a distinction between the priesthood of all

¹⁸⁰ *Cor*, 68^v.

¹⁸¹ *LC* IV.1.13,*Sam*, 187^r: Qui eligunt, videre debent, non tantum, ut velit ille, qui eligitur, sed etiam ut sciat et possit. [. . .] Multi enim se, cum ineptissimi sint, aptos putant: multi contra, cum sint satis instructi et apti, tamen aut verecundia aliqua aut modestia adducti, sese putant esse ineptos. Quare iudicium esse debet penes rem publicam aut ecclesiam.

¹⁸² *Cor*, 239^r: Quin et Apostolus ad Timotheum scribit, Ne cui cito manus imponat. Ubi vides ad institutionem ministri, exigi, ut manus imponantur. See also, *ibid*, 240^r, for Martyr's respect for order in this connection, responding to Anabaptist claims that there was evidence in the New Testament that ministry was exercised without this rite by self-designated ministers: Neque dubito, vel Paulum, vel Apollo, istos legitime ordinasse, et ad sanctum ministerium initiasse.

¹⁸³ *Sam*, 41^{r-v}; *LC* IV.1.19.

¹⁸⁴ *LC* IV.1.23.

believers and ministerial office. He shared in the repudiation of notions of a sacrificing priesthood sacramentally ordained in the apostolic succession, and held to the principle of congregational election.

In the 1520s, Luther had taught the right of every Christian believer to judge the teaching of councils and scholars, and to the necessity of a congregational call for the legitimate exercise of ministerial office.¹⁸⁵ However, while Martyr in principle conceived of public ministry as an office or function to be exercised with congregational consent, his thought on ministry has an greater emphasis on the need for order, characteristic of the apprehensive second generation of reformers. Thus, though he recognises that the vocation common to all believers entails mutual and domestic ministry, he does not connect this as Luther had with the priesthood of all believers, nor suggest that the power of this priesthood includes the right to administer the sacraments.¹⁸⁶ Like his contemporaries, he is more reluctant than Luther had been to envisage ministry as the delegation of a universal role. The congregational principle is in some tension with his notion of ministry as divine gift.

Martyr's conception of the minister as a co-worker with God was common to many reformers. It had appeared, for example, in the 1530 *Tetrapolitan Confession*, principally Bucer's work. This document describes ministers as exercising Christ's authority to bind and loose, the power of the keys, on his behalf, a concept of ministry which finds an echo in Martyr's notion of ministers as stewards of Christ's household. On the other hand, he does not invest ministry with the same degree of dignity as Calvin. The similarity of their thought is suggested by the 1543 edition of the *Institutes*: it is through the word that God exercises his reign in the church, using human ministry of men to accomplish this.¹⁸⁷ The description of ministers as those through whom God distributes his gifts to the church is parallel to Martyr's description of the minister as a steward. However, Martyr does not describe the ministry as Calvin's 'even the most excellent of all things'.¹⁸⁸ Nor does he make Calvin's distinction between the outward call of the church, and the 'secret call' of the individual to ministry.¹⁸⁹ The suggestion of Bucer and others that the possession of authentic ministry was one of the marks of the church also finds little echo in Martyr.

¹⁸⁵ LW 39: 301-14; WA 11: 408-16; Jaroslav Pelikan, *Spirit and Structure: Luther and the Institutions of the Church* (London: Collins, 1968), 35-7.

¹⁸⁶ LW 46: 23-4, 27; WA 12: 181-2, 184.

¹⁸⁷ CR 29: 561-2; *Inst.*, IV.3.1.

¹⁸⁸ CR 29: 562-3; *Inst.*, IV.3.2, 3.

¹⁸⁹ CR 29: 568; *Inst.*, IV.3.11.

Nevertheless, the differences between these reformers are of emphasis and expression rather than substance. The pastoral epistles supply them with their qualifications for ministry.¹⁹⁰ Though its implementation varied, the insistence on congregational consent was common.¹⁹¹ Further, like Martyr, Calvin and others believed that the laying on of hands was the only biblically authorised means of giving public expression to the election of ministers.¹⁹² We shall see in chapter three that his notions of ministerial order were similar if not identical to those of Bucer and Calvin.

Conclusion

The diffusion of Martyr's observations about the church through works published over two decades, together with the frequently polemical nature of much of his writing, complicates the task of describing his ecclesiology. Nevertheless, our survey has highlighted the outlines of his doctrine. Rooted in his understanding of the union which the Holy Spirit works through faith between the believer and Christ, Martyr's is a dynamic concept of the church. Through the ministry with which Christ endows the church, it is called into being and sustained by word, sacrament and discipline. These are the instruments by which it is both nourished and conformed to Christ. In the following chapter, we turn to the relationship of this organic concept of the church as a universal spiritual body with its ordered manifestations on earth.

¹⁹⁰ Eg, in Martin Bucer, *De Regno Christi*, in *Melanchthon and Bucer*, ed. W. Pauck, LCC 19 (London: SCM, 1969), 230; CR 29: 569-70; *Inst.* IV.3.13.

¹⁹¹ CR 29: 570-1; *Inst.*, IV.3.14-15; Kittelson (1994), 85.

¹⁹² CR 29: 571-2; *Inst.*, IV.3.16.

Chapter Three

Church Order

So, my brethren, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues; but all things should be done decently and in order.

I Corinthians 14.40

And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers,

Ephesians 4.11

And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues.

I Corinthians 12.28

Introduction: the Obligation of Order

The church's position in European society was already changing before the Reformation dawned. The continent's expanding intellectual, technological and geographical horizons were creating tensions for an institution already traumatised by its late-medieval history. The muscle-flexing of new monarchies and city-states, and the preliminary stirrings of national self-consciousness added further challenges. The reformers both drew upon and influenced these engines of change. But contemporary hopes for a new era marched hand-in-hand with fears for social and political stability. Luther's assault on the authority of the old church seemed to match the aspirations of a new age, yet also appeared as a further solvent of social cohesion.

In fact, initial exuberance was quickly tempered by a powerful instinct for order. Luther soon found himself opposing unilateral iconoclasm and liturgical radicalism, and in his response to the Peasants' War disilluminated those who interpreted his ecclesiological *bouleversement* as a critique of the whole social order. By the mid-1520s, the mainstream Reformation, in Switzerland as well as Germany, was seeking association and exploring mutual support with the emerging hierarchies, aristocratic

and mercantile, which governed northern Europe.

Underlying this was the sixteenth-century horror of anarchy. The existence of a transcendent, divinely-appointed *ordo rerum* was universally assumed. The spiritual and temporal formed one dispensation, under providential control. Society was ordered to the extent that it corresponded to this divine arrangement. The human task was thus to appropriate and replicate it on earth. Its continual maintenance, in the face of the disorder introduced by sin, was an obligation. Further, such earthly order would always involve rule and subordination, since social differentiation was an integral element of the divine disposition. To challenge it was to defy God. However, agreement on what this order should look like in practice was increasingly lacking. Consensus on the proper *loci* of authority in church and state was elusive. The assumptions of canon and civil law, in particular, were under strain, as the institutions which claimed responsibility for them, papacy and empire, faced threats to their hegemony. The failure of the conciliarist challenge to the papal monarchy had not extinguished the 'ascending' theories of authority which it had publicised, and a parallel division between 'constitutionalists' and 'absolutists' was to characterise sixteenth century debates on political theory. The reformers reflected the resulting ambiguity, generally rejecting canon law but vigorously contesting the charge that they were the instigators of disorder. Indeed, from around 1530 in particular, the formal ordering of their churches became a dominant concern. Their ordinances were careful to distinguish between their rejection of traditional church law and their commitment to an order consistent with evangelical liberty of conscience.¹

For social historians, the reformers thus became the willing partners of the political class and its associated, educated elite. Their concern for order operated to legitimate the hegemonic power of the band of educated lawyers, theologians and bureaucrats on whom the rulers of Europe increasingly depended. Theological support endowed their

¹ Gerald Strauss, 'The Idea of Order in the German Reformation', in Gerald Strauss, *Enacting the Reformation in Germany* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1993), XIV; Gillian R. Evans, *Problems of Authority in the Reformation Debates* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 207-9; Constantin Fasolt, 'Visions of Order in the Canonists and Civilians', in *Handbook of European History 1400-1600: Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation*, eds. Thomas A. Brady, Heiko A. Oberman and James D Tracy, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1995), II, 31-59. For a helpful discussion of the historiographical debate over the relationship of order and freedom in the Lutheran reformation, and examination of Luther's approach, see Jeffrey P. Jaynes, "'Ordo et libertas': Church Discipline and the Makers of Church Order in Sixteenth Century North Germany", (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Ohio State University, 1993), esp 1-33. Luther's reaction is illustrated in his introduction to the *Smalcald Articles*, in *The Book of Concord*, 218-20.

programme of social control with moral authority, and so shaped the emergence of the early modern state. The church ordinances of the reformers, forcefully expressing the necessity of order as a divine obligation, reinforced this development: their regular invocation of I Corinthians 14.40 was a convenient justification for a socio-political agenda.²

However, while the confessionalisation of Europe in the later sixteenth century saw the emergence of coalitions of church and state in many places, it is anachronistic to denote the original impulse for the restoration of order as a movement of 'social discipline'. It was not fear of disorder which principally inspired the reformers. Indeed, the early sixteenth-century was marked by genuine aspirations for social and religious utopia. There was a strong sense that much had gone awry in church and society, and a resultant yearning for the restoration of a proper order, corresponding to the divine *ordo rerum*. This concern was not reactionary but anticipatory and transformative. It found expression not only in treatises such as More's *Utopia* and Bucer's *De Regno Christi*, but also in the actual reforms attempted at all levels of society, and was epitomised in the notion of 'commonwealth' with its strong ethic of service.³

The political turbulence of the early Reformation tempered such optimism. Peter Martyr's career coincided with this adjustment, straddling the transition between Oberman's two eras, the 'city reformation' and the 'reformation of the refugees'.⁴ In Strasbourg, he was at the heart of Bucer's project to order society as a *corpus Christianum* on a Protestant basis, and was his associate in the same project in England. But the reformers' dream of transforming the whole western church, while not completely abandoned, was giving way to a recognition that Rome was committed to a course which excluded their aspirations. Martyr's last lengthy comment on the division, the *De schismate* scholion, defends a separation which he clearly now regards as permanent. Indeed, the Reformation was already dividing into a number of streams, Lutheran and Reformed, 'magisterial' or 'under the cross', to identify the most obvious divisions, each with its developing distinctives on church order. Martyr's writings both reflect this transition and ignore it. His readiness to comment on personal and political ethics corresponds to the contemporary demand for guidelines for practical Christian

² Strauss (1993), XIV, 8-13.

³ Matheson (2000), 49-76.

⁴ Heiko A. Oberman, 'The Impact of the Reformation: Problems and Perspectives', in *Politics and Society in Sixteenth Century Europe: Essays for Sir Geoffrey Elton on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, eds. E.I. Kouri & T. Scott (London: Macmillan, 1987), 9-10.

living and to the survival of *corpus christianum* assumptions.⁵ On the other hand, his descriptions of the external order of the church's life do not suggest that he was ready to align his thought with any of the emerging Reformed paradigms of church government. Though his concept of church order includes elements in common with these, it is also strikingly traditional in some aspects, and reveals Martyr as a distinctive, if not especially original, thinker.

He shared the concern of his contemporaries for order. Soon after his flight from Italy, in a letter to 'the church at Lucca', probably to a lay congregation rather than to the canons of San Frediano, he suggests that his ministry there had been hindered by the inadequacy of the church's polity: 'I was your pastor; I did what I was able to accomplish by sermons and lectures since I was not able to govern the church in the way that Christian truth demands'. Flight had evidently liberated him from this frustration, and the letter is full of admiration for the regime he found in Strasbourg: 'I wish that church of yours would be adorned with this sort of governance'.⁶ Though his work lacks a sustained treatment of this subject, abundant comments indicate his familiarity with contemporary assumptions. In an Oxford sermon, he alludes to Augustine's well-known description of order: 'Peace is the tranquillity of order. Order is the disposition of similar and dissimilar things which gives everything its due'.⁷ Indeed, Martyr's universe is fundamentally an Aristotelian one. Its order has its origin in the creative act of God, who also preserves it.⁸ In the posthumously published Strasbourg Genesis lectures, divine providence is said to include a power of direction, to establish the order of relations between all things. Augustine's formula is already to hand: 'We may prove that this order is in all things by the very nature of order itself. It is defined by Augustine as "the disposition of things both like and unlike, giving to each one that which belongs to it"'. Evidence of this order is available to humanity through experience of the natural world, and from Scripture. The providential ordering by the God who 'works all things according to the counsel of his will' (Ephesians 1.11)

⁵ On the contribution of this to the popularity of the *Loci Communes*, see C. Strohm, 'Peter Martyr Vermigli's *Loci Communes* and Calvin's *Institutio Christianae Religionis*', in Campi, ed. (2002), 77-104, and J. Patrick Donnelly, 'Peter Martyr Vermigli's Political Ethics', *ibid.*, 59-66.

⁶ *To All the Faithful of the Church at Lucca Called to be Saints*, 25 December 1542, LC, 1071-3; PML 5: 98, 100.

⁷ LC 1047; PML 5: 229; the allusion is to Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 19.13, PL 41: 640: Pax omnium rerum, tranquillitas ordinis. Ordo est parium dispariumque rerum sua cuique loca tribuens dispositio. This text was well known, for example being cited in the preamble to the Hessean church order; Strauss (1993), XIV, 14.

⁸ Donnelly (1976a), 69-72.

embraces every created thing, great and small.⁹

This approach underlies two references in Martyr's commentary on Romans, both occurring in his discussion of the 'powers that be' in chapter thirteen. The order which God has established extends to the institutions and degrees of human society. The efficient cause of magistracy is God himself, and 'the form is the order, which the providence of God has appointed in all things human'. This order, then, includes permanent social differentiation, for which Martyr employs a familiar analogy:

And in man's body he has set forth the head in the top, as in a tower, and under it has placed the eyes, the ears, the nose, and other members even to the sole of the feet; so in order he preserves human society, so that there are in it certain degrees, by which it is directed in those works wherein men communicate the one with the other. For it is not possible that where all are equal should long be kept peace.¹⁰

Martyr observes that Romans 13 relates exclusively to civil power. Its use by Boniface VIII in *Unam Sanctam* (1302) to support claims to the supremacy of the ecclesiastical over the civil power was illegitimate. But the principle of order does apply to the church. As there is a civil order, so there is an ecclesiastical. The two are distinct but have a common origin: 'for the foundation of either of them depends on the word of God, and so we make one beginning and not two'.¹¹

This chapter outlines Martyr's thought on the external, visible order of the church. We begin with a discussion of the relationship he understands to exist between church and state, including his critique of the subversion of order by the papacy. The chapter then proceeds to examine the nature and institutions of the church's government. The obligation of order extends beyond implementing the specific prescriptions of Scripture on the church's polity to the observation of the principle in its liturgical and social life.

⁹ *Gen*, 115^r; this forms part of the scholion *De Providentia*, which together with a longer *locus* on the same subject from the Samuel commentary, is included in *LC* I.13.1-16. A modern English translation of both is in *PML* 4: 176-96.

¹⁰ *Rom*, 641, *Romans*, 427^v.

¹¹ *LC* IV.13.21; *Iud*, 188^v: *Nam utriusque fundamentum a verbo Dei pendet, atque ita unum principium, non duo, facimus.* For the text of *Unam Sanctam: Extravagantes Communium* I.8, see *Corpus iuris canonici*, eds. E.L. Richter and E. Friedberg, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1879-81), II, 1245-6.

The Church and the Magistrate

Preliminary: a political analyst

In 1561 Martyr published a commentary on Judges, based on lectures delivered during his second stay in Strasbourg. At the opening of the work, dedicated to the governors of the city's Gymnasium, Martyr emphasises his admiration for the pre-monarchial polity of Israel, with its origins in the Mosaic eldership. His analysis reflects his exegetical practice of drawing principles of both civil and ecclesiastical government from the example of Israel. It is characteristic of his approach to the subject:

That estate therefore in virtue of God was a kingdom, but in respect of the senate and those chief men it was *aristocratia*. Because in electing of them they had no regard to their riches but to their virtue and godliness, for that the weightiest matters were referred to the people, therefore we may say it was a common wealth. Wherefore it manifestly appears that the administration of matter of the Israelites was very well tempered of three kinds of governments.¹²

Martyr's subsequent threefold classification of government is borrowed from Aristotle's *Politics*, which describes the rule of the one, the rule of the few (either by the best men, or for the best end) and the rule of the many, as the three 'straight' constitutions (kingship, aristocracy and 'polity') that aim at securing the good of all.¹³ This analysis, widely employed in the sixteenth century, is nevertheless one of Martyr's distinctive trademarks among his contemporaries. He employed it to explain the church's order as a 'mixed polity', yet applied it differently to civil government. Secular rule normally corresponds to one of the three paradigms, rather than to a composite. However, it was its pattern of mixed rule, and God's provision of judges to deliver the nation from the consequences of infidelity, which emboldens Martyr to describe the pre-kingship era in Israel as a 'golden age'.¹⁴

¹² *Judges*, 1^v; *Iud*, 1^v: Fuit itaque status ille, quod ad ipsum Deum, regnum, sed quo ad senatum et primores viros aristocratia, quia in illis eligendis nequaquam divitiae spectabantur, sed habebatur unius virtutis et pietatis ratio; et quoniam de gravissimis rebus ad populum referebatur, ibi rempublicam fuisse dicemus. Martyr cites Exodus and Deuteronomy for evidence of this elected 'senate', referring to Moses' appointment of leaders in Exodus 18.13-26, as well as to Deuteronomy 1.9-18.

¹³ Aristotle, *The Politics*, tr. T.A. Sinclair (London: Penguin, 1962), III.7, 115-16.

¹⁴ *Judges*, 2^v; *Iud*, 2^r.

Civil power

Martyr's choice of the lengthier historical books of the Old Testament for lecture material provided him with ample opportunity to comment on kingship, rule and its relationship with the church. The resultant commentaries, together with his work on Romans, provide extensive evidence of his thought on this and related issues.¹⁵ A comprehensive study of Martyr's political thought is still awaited. Kingdon's work introduces the key texts but does not attempt an exhaustive analysis. Pending further study, consensus on the affinities of Martyr's views is lacking. Kingdon concludes that his political thought was, surprisingly, Lutheran in its basic orientation, though Donnelly's observation that Martyr's thought on the relationship of church and state was appropriated most thoroughly by Thomas Erastus situates the reformer in a different theological milieu, albeit a princely one.¹⁶

For Martyr all rule is of divine origin. The authority of a husband over his wife, of parents over their children, and of a master over his servants, is derived from God. Observable in nature, Scripture confirms this order. Princes receive their authority from God, and rule on his behalf, whether or not they acknowledge him as its source. Indeed, rule by evil men is to be preferred to anarchy. Even under bad rulers much good is achieved, and through them God exercises his just judgment, where necessary chastising his people.¹⁷ Whatever the 'instrument' of appointment, the office of magistrate is held directly of God.¹⁸ In terms of the medieval inheritance, this situates Martyr's thought broadly in the Marsilian stream of thought, in which jurisdiction belongs to civil rather than ecclesiastical authorities, rather than in a hierocratic tradition. His language suggests the influence of this Aristotelian approach, though

¹⁵ The primary texts are Martyr's comments on Romans 13 (*Rom*, 640-9; *Romans*, 426^v-432^v), the lengthy *De Magistratu* scholion from the end of c. 19 of the Judges commentary (*Iud*, 183^r-191^v; *LC* IV.13), and a number of shorter pieces gathered in *LC* IV.14.

¹⁶ Kingdon (1980a), xviii; Donnelly (1976a), 185-91. Although Martyr declined an invitation to join the Heidelberg faculty, the influence of his thought in the Palatinate was secured by the subsequent presence there of his former students Zanchi, Ursinus and Olevianus, Boquin and Tremellius. In the early seventeenth century, the town became the centre for the re-publication of his writings.

¹⁷ *Rom*, 641-42; *Romans*, 427^v-428^r; *Iud*, 107^v; *Judges*, 149^v.

¹⁸ *Iud*, 183^v, 187^v-188^r; *LC* IV.13.3, 19. In the latter section, Martyr cites both canon and civil law as evidence for the divine appointment of princes, without ecclesiastical intervention: *Distinctio*, 96.11, *Si imperator*, in *R & F*, I, 341; *Codex Iustinianum*, 1.17, *De veteri iure enucleando*, in *Corpus iuris civilis*, 3 vols (Berlin: Weidmann, 1954) II, 69-74.

there is little acknowledgment of particular writers.¹⁹

In terms of function, magistracy has two principal aspects: 'A magistrate is a person elected, by God in fact, to defend the laws and peace, to repress vices and evils with punishments and the sword, and to promote virtues in every way'.²⁰ This couplet, the punishment of evil and the encouragement of virtue, is a recurring feature of Martyr's discussions of civil power.²¹ The relationship he describes between law and government bears on this. Representative of his era's appropriation of classical notions of rule, Martyr relates magisterial office to God's role as a law-giver. The magistrate reflects the divine character of his office by being a 'living and speaking law'.²² He is responsible for seeing that the laws 'as touching outward discipline' are kept, for punishing wrong, and for seeking the good of his subjects.²³ In all these aspects, the magistrate is the vicar and minister of divine sovereignty. God reigns through good kings.²⁴

The magistrate's duty is accordingly to serve God by caring for his subjects. Like his contemporaries, Martyr often describes the ruler as the father of his people: the obedience owed by subjects is mandated by the fifth commandment, 'for the magistrate is nothing other than the father of the country'.²⁵ As the senators of ancient Rome were termed *patres conscripti*, contemporary magistrates are to conceive their role on this model. A ruler's duty is to have a 'fatherly mind towards his people'.²⁶

The forms which civil government may legitimately take are several. The conceptual

¹⁹ J.P. Canning, 'Development, c. 1150 - c. 1450: Introduction: politics, institutions and ideas', in *CHMPT*, 355-66, describes Marsilius' assimilation of Aristotelian concepts of authority to the divine origin of rule and its expression in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

²⁰ *Rom*, 640: Est ergo magistratus persona electa, idque a Deo, ut leges et pacem tueatur, et vitia atque mala, poenis et gladio reprimat, et virtutes omnibus modis promoveat.

²¹ As well as in the *Judges* scholion and *Romans* commentary, it appears in the scholion on headship in the church, reprinted in *LC* IV.3 from chapter 8 of the *Samuel* commentary.

²² *Iud*, 183^v; *LC* IV.13.1; this phrase was a commonplace in Byzantine political theory, is found in the *Corpus iuris civilis*, and drew on ideas current by the 1st century AD of the monarch as the human exponent of natural law. Cf, *Novellae*, 105.2.4, *Corpus iuris civilis*, III, 506-07; John Procopé, 'Greek and Roman Political Theory' and D.M. Nichol, 'Byzantine Political Thought', in *CHMPT*, 26-27, 64-65.

²³ *Proposita ex XVIII et XIX capite Exodi, Necessaria* 3, *LC* 1024; *PML* 1: 138: This is a strong argument: God made laws, therefore he also desires magistrates.

²⁴ *LC* IV.13.1, 14.1.

²⁵ *Rom*, 640; *Romans*, 427^r; *Iud*, 190^v; *LC* IV.13.29.

²⁶ *Rom*, 640; *Iud*, 75^v; *Judges*, 105^v; *LC* IV.13.3, 33.

framework to which Martyr turns, derived from Aristotle's *Politics*, had since the thirteenth century exercised a powerful influence over European political thought. Following this tradition, Martyr classifies government as either monarchy, aristocracy, or 'polity', along with their debased manifestations, tyranny, oligarchy and democracy. Most governments take one of these forms, though the Roman republic embodied all three of the former. His own preference is for aristocracy, which he often explains as government by the best men, though he avers that God is the author even of the corrupt forms.²⁷

The divine institution of rule entails a corresponding duty of obedience on the part of its subjects. To be governed by the Spirit and the word of God does not exempt the Christian from civil obedience. Christ himself submitted to the ruling authorities of his day, paying tribute and enduring the cross. Indeed, to resist the prince is to resist God. It is not wrong for Christians to oppose the usurpation of power, but once a tyrant has seized the throne, even he is owed obedience.²⁸

Martyr admits only two partial exceptions to the rule of non-resistance. The first is where a ruler ordains something contrary to the law of God; the believer is not obliged to obey such a decree.²⁹ The second is related. Though private subjects never wield the sword and accordingly have no right of resistance to superior authority, the position of subordinate magistrates is different. They have a duty actively to resist their superior should he enact ungodly laws. The legitimacy of imperial electors opposing the emperor's imposition of the mass is particularly in Martyr's mind, though he expounds it as a general principle. Where rulers transgress the limits of their authority, it is permissible for lesser magistrates, such as the German electors or the senate and people in the Roman Republic, to constrain them to do their duty and, if necessary, to oppose them with force.³⁰ Kingdon points out that Martyr's argument here rests on legal rather than biblical grounds: in both the Romans and Judges commentaries he articulates a 'contract' theory of resistance which is related to the law of the Empire and supported

²⁷ *Cor*, 68^r; *Rom*, 641; *LC IV*.13.2. For the reception of Aristotle in the west, D.E. Luscombe and G.R. Evans, 'The Twelfth Century Renaissance', and J.P. Canning, 'Introduction: politics, institutions and ideas', in *CHMPT*, 23-24, 334-8, 355-66.

²⁸ *Rom*, 641-2, 644; *Romans*, 427^{r-v}, 429^v-430^r; *Iud*, 65^r; *Judges*, 91^r; *LC IV* .3.1.

²⁹ *Rom*, 645; *Romans*, 430^r; *LC IV*.3.1.

³⁰ *Iud*, 64^v-65^r (where the electors are specifically mentioned), 142^{r-v}; *Judges*, 90^v-91^r, 197^v; *Rom*, 645-6; *Romans*, 430^v; *LC IV*.13.27, 29-31.

by classical and contemporary examples rather than biblical precedent.³¹ The issue is particularly pertinent for Martyr on account of the responsibility for religion he ascribes to the magistrate. It is to the relationship of civil and ecclesiastical power that we now turn.

Civil and ecclesiastical power

Papal aspirations to temporal supremacy represented for Martyr not only a misreading of Romans 13 text, typified by *Unam Sanctam*, but also a misunderstanding of the nature and ends of civil and ecclesiastical authority.³² His *De Magistratu* scholion contains the clearest summary of his thought on their relationship. There are two jurisdictions, one political or civil, the other spiritual. Both are subject to the word of God, in accordance with which each ought to act. But they differ as to both means and ends. All people are subject to the civil power, whose means are sword and reward, and whose purpose is to achieve outward conformity to the law. The purpose of the spiritual 'subjection', on the other hand is 'good motions of the mind and inward repentance', summarised as faith and willing obedience. Its means is the word of God alone.³³

From this distinction Martyr outlines the relationship of the two powers. This consists of a mutual, asymmetrical submission. Civil authorities, ordained of God, are to rule in accordance with the word of God. It provides a 'common rule, whereby all things ought to be tempered and directed. For it teaches in what manner the outward sword and public wealth ought to be governed'. An office of the church is accordingly to teach and admonish rulers in the discharge of this duty. In this sense the civil power is subject to ministers, as they preach the word. This extends to the exercise of church discipline: where a prince persistently governs sinfully, the church is not to shrink from excommunication. The example of Ambrose, in instructing Theodosius over his rule, and in disciplining him for its abuse, is particularly significant for Martyr. However, the church does not have the power to depose civil rulers, since it does not bear the

³¹ R.M. Kingdon, 'The Function of Law in the Political Thought of Peter Martyr Vermigli', in *Reformatio Perennis: Essays on Calvin and the Reformation in Honor of Ford Lewis Battles*, ed. B.A. Gerrish (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1981), 164-6.

³² *Rom*, 642; *Romans*, 428^v.

³³ *Iud*, 185^{r-v}, 187^r; *LC* IV.13.9-10, 17.

sword.³⁴

The magistrate's authority over the church is more complex. In the first place, its ministers are subject to the civil jurisdiction of the magistrate. Traditional claims for clerical immunity are unjustified.³⁵ Ministers are under civil laws and liable to civil punishments if they are transgressed:

Ministers, since they are men and citizens, are undoubtedly subject with their lands, riches and possessions to the magistrate. Thus Christ paid tribute, as did the apostles and the whole primitive church, since they were most holy men. Their conduct also was subject to the censures and judgments of the magistrates.³⁶

However, the magistrate has a more specific responsibility for the church itself. Since his own office requires him to see that others fulfil theirs, he has a custodial role in the church. His responsibility for the right ordering of society includes ensuring that a godly ministry functions within it. Though the word of God and the sacraments are beyond his authority, the church's ministers are under it.³⁷ Theology and history support this. Both the Old Testament and the history of the church reveal kings and emperors intervening to restore right worship, where the clergy have failed.³⁸ Further, the accountability of the magistrate includes the responsibility to depose the morally wayward:

If they teach not right, neither administer the sacraments orderly, it is the office of the Magistrate to compel them to an order, and to see that they teach not corruptly, and that they mingle not fables, nor yet abuse the sacraments, or deliver them otherwise than the Lord hath commanded. Also if they live naughtily and wickedly, they shall put them forth of the holy ministry. This did Solomon who deposed Abiathar and put Zadok in his place, as it is written in the first book of

³⁴ *Iud*, 185^r-186^r; *LC* IV.13.9-12.

³⁵ *Iud*, 187^v-190^r; *LC* IV.13.18-26.

³⁶ *Iud*, 185^v; *LC* IV.13.11.

³⁷ *Rom*, 643: Imo etiam quod ad functionem ipsam attinet, subiecti esse debent pio, et religioso magistratu: non quod verbum Dei, aut sacramenta putemus subiicienda esse humanis legibus: sed quod officium sit magistratus aut puniri, aut summonere ministros, si se in functione sua male gerant, si veritatem adulterent, aut perperam administrent sacramenta. *Romans* 428^v.

³⁸ *Sam*, 50^{r-v}: Nam quod ad Ecclesiasticam potestatem attinet, satis est civilis magistratus. Is enim, ut ait Aristoteles in *Politicis*, curare debet, ut omnes officium faciant, ut iurisconsulti, ut medici, ut rustici, ut pharmocopolae: inter quos numerare etiam ministros et concionatores. *LC* IV.3.6. *Rom*, 642-3; *Romans* 428^v; *LC* IV.3.12.

Kings, the second chapter. And in the New Testament, Justinian displaced Silverius and Vigilius.³⁹

Sacred history provides further examples of the beneficial effects of such magisterial oversight: religion in Israel flourished under Joshua and the 'wise and godly senators'. Conversely it often declined when a good prince died.⁴⁰ The well-being of their subjects requires magistrates to exercise this lawful authority over the church, without which it would suffer.⁴¹ Their office thus gives them a unique position in the church:

Kings and magistrates when they are godly, in my judgment ought to have the chief place in the church, and to them it pertains, if religion be ill administered, to correct the defaults; For therefore they bear the sword to maintain God's honour. But they cannot be heads of the church.⁴²

Martyr relates this aspect of the prince's responsibility to his function as the law-enforcer. As keeper of both tables of the law, the maintenance of outward religious observance is as much part of his function as the punishment of wrong. He is not at liberty to neglect this aspect of his office:

Nor should he to whom the sword is committed to forget, that he is the guardian not only of the second table but also of the first. Therefore he ought to be diligent, that religion is rightly administered, and in accordance with the word of God.⁴³

Indeed, since it does not bear the sword, the church needs his help. The minister can only teach and reprove from the word of God. The magistrate, on the other hand, is authorised to use coercive power, even to the extent of deposing bishops and appointing suitable alternatives. The church and its property therefore depend on his

³⁹ CP IV.13.12; *Iud*, 185^V-186^R.

⁴⁰ *Iud*, 47^V; *Judges*, 66^V.

⁴¹ *Mel*, 109^V: Deinde ut omnes videre possunt, Ecclesiis nostris autoritas publica minime deest, cum in eis et Magistratus et principes versentur. [...] Vehementer hic errant, cum Deus et cuique Magistratui et cuique Principi mandavit, ut de illorum salute, qui suae fidei commissi sunt, diligentia summa et studio vigilantissimi sint solliciti. *PML* 1: 205.

⁴² *Iud*, 75^V; *Judges*, 105^V.

⁴³ *Rom*, 647: Neque vere ignorare debet is, cui gladius commissus est, se custodem esse non modo posterioris, sed etiam prioris tabulae. Quare satagere debet, ut religio quoque recte administretur, et ex verbo Dei. *Romans*, 431^R; See also *LC* IV.13.12-13, 31; *Iud*, 185^V-186^R; *Judges*, 240^V.

protection from the 'enemies of godliness', including if necessary errant ministers.⁴⁴

In both the Romans commentary and the *De Magistratu* scholion, Martyr suggests that this role extends to the use of the sword to protect the church from heresy. Keeping the church in sound doctrine means punishing heretics as well as ensuring orthodox teaching.⁴⁵ Like Nebuchadnezzar, secular rulers should be ready to remove 'idolatries, blasphemies and superstitions, so soon as ever as they shall find them out'. Martyr expects the magistrate to take the initiative in this cleansing process.⁴⁶

In Martyr's analysis, the troubles of the early church confirm the value of this permanent supervisory role of the civil power. It was the emperor, he argues, who oversaw the Donatist controversy and gave the final judgment. All the general councils of the church were called by imperial fiat. At many of them, the emperor himself presided.⁴⁷ Indeed, he often took an active role, and participated in the decisions made. Ecclesiastical councils accordingly should include ambassadors from Christian states, since the civil power is rightly involved in ensuring the doctrinal health of the church.⁴⁸

This last point highlights a significant implication of Martyr's theology. Though he envisages a role for a general council representative of the whole church, and including delegates of civil powers, his doctrine of the relationship of church and magistrate means that the effective jurisdictional *locus* of the church is determined by the effective civil polity. The magistrate's responsibility for his subjects includes their spiritual welfare, and hence the church's order will correspond to the political divisions of western Europe. Indeed, in the *De schismate* scholion, Martyr repudiates the Roman charge that the churches of the Reformation lack lawful authority, contending that the civil powers under which they operate constitutes this framework. For this purpose the *locus* of the church is coterminous with the territorial state:

Moreover, as anyone can see, our churches do not lack civil authority. They include magistrates and princes. Nor is it valid to say, as they often do, that we should not proceed on the lead of one or two republics or follow one or two princes but should wait for the consent

⁴⁴ *Iud*, 185^v-186^r, 188^r; LC IV.13.12, 21.

⁴⁵ *Rom*, 646-7; *Romans*, 431^r.

⁴⁶ *Iud* 190^v-191^r; LC IV.13.31.

⁴⁷ *Iud*, 191^{r-v}; LC IV.13.32

⁴⁸ *Mel*, 105^v; *PML* 1: 188-9.

of all Christendom before taking action. In this they are dead wrong, since God has commanded every magistrate and prince to care for the well-being of those entrusted to them with particular care and diligence.⁴⁹

Martyr in context

Martyr's attitude to the relationship of church and state was unexceptional. Mainstream reformers of his era were acutely aware of their reliance on the civil power. Notwithstanding Luther's reluctance to concede the church's permanent dependence on the magistrate, by the time of Martyr's advent in northern Europe, reformers had been industriously implementing schemes of reform in collaboration with local rulers for nearly two decades. His observations are an unsurprising reflection of the era of the 'city reformation'.

Martyr shares the assumption, variously held by both Lutheran and Reformed thinkers, that Scripture envisages a permanent role in the church for the magistrate. Luther's own distinction between the two kingdoms, and his consequent reluctance to envisage an enduring involvement in the church by secular rulers, was in this context atypical. Although he occasionally conceded the church's need of secular help, in principle Luther denied that the magistrate by virtue of his office had any authority in the church.⁵⁰ This position set him apart from late-medieval and Renaissance thought on the role of secular governments as supervisors of morals, and was soon abandoned by other leading reformers. By the mid 1530s, Melanchthon was already moving towards the view that the magistrate was the guardian of both tables of the law, responsible not only for the punishment of vice but also for the defence of true religion. Both tables are part of the permanent moral law: by his *ius reformandi* the prince is responsible for defending the church's doctrine by extirpating heresy and banishing blasphemous teaching.⁵¹

⁴⁹ *Mel*, 109V; *PML* 1: 205.

⁵⁰ W.D.J. Cargill Thompson, *The Political Thought of Martin Luther* (Brighton: Harvester, 1984), 119-54, esp 132, 135.

⁵¹ R.J. Bast, 'From Two Kingdoms to Two Tables: The Ten Commandments and the Christian Magistrate', *ARG* 89 (1998), 79-85. Melanchthon would articulate this in his 1539 *De officio principum* (Wittenberg, 1539), Aiiii: Magistratus est custos primae et secundae tabulae legis, quod ad externam disciplinam attinet, hoc est, prohibere externa scelera et punire sotes debet et proponere bona exempla. Manifestum est autem in primo et secundo praecepto prohiberi idolatriam et blasphemias, ergo necesse est Magistratum externam idolatriam et blasphemias tollere, et curare, ut pia doctrina et pii cultus proponantur.

Others advocated an even more active role for secular rulers.⁵² Martin Bucer was perhaps the most significant. Influenced by Erasmus' 1516 *Institutio principis christiani* with its description of the magistrate as the servant of the common good, even to the extent of enforcing the Mosaic religious laws, Bucer went further than Melancthon.⁵³ In effect, the two kingdoms become one: the magistrate's responsibility is to realise the *societas Christianorum*. The external realm can be progressively spiritualised, and the two domains of secular and ecclesiastical power exist to serve the one kingdom of Christ.⁵⁴ The civil authorities are responsible for the eternal salvation as well as the earthly welfare of their subjects, as the articles he drew up for Ulm in 1531 and Strasbourg itself in 1533 both suggest.⁵⁵ Nevertheless the two powers remain distinct. The true church is not identified with civil society. While it calls upon the magistrate to frame the Christian common wealth and supervise its ministry, it retains an autonomy in the exercise of ministry, including, in principle, the disciplining of its members.

It is towards this position that Martyr's own thought tended, without wholeheartedly embracing it. Like him, Bucer saw the magistrate as the 'father of the country', and ascribed to civil government responsibility for public welfare, temporal and spiritual. The form of a nation's government could vary, but this duty was constant.⁵⁶ Martyr is, however, more cautious than Bucer. Though secular rulers in his writings are frequently compared to Old Testament kings, their authority over the church is principally remedial. Their intervention is occasioned by the failure of the church's ministers to exercise their functions. The role of the magistrate in such circumstances is corrective and restorative. He is the guarantor of ministry, not its provider.

In maintaining this distinction between civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction Martyr's thought is reminiscent of the more wary Calvin. More sharply than Bucer, Calvin

⁵² See J.T. Ford, 'Wolfgang Musculus and the Office of the Christian Magistrate', *ARG* 91 (2000), 149-67, for a discussion of the developing tension in the mid 1530s between the Wittenberg theologians and advocates of magisterial rule over the church.

⁵³ James M. Estes, 'Erasmus and the Origins of the Protestant State Church', *ARG* 83 (1992), 52-57.

⁵⁴ Hammann (1984), 319.

⁵⁵ Martin Greschat, 'The relation between church and civil community in Bucer's reforming work,' in D.F. Wright, ed. (1994), 17. Other reformers in Bucer's circle encouraged secular rulers to undertake responsibility for religion. Wolfgang Capito's *Responsio de Missa, Matrimonio et Iure Magistratus in Religionem* (Strasbourg: Rihel, 1537), written for the Duke of Palatinate-Zweibrücken, placed the administrative power of the medieval bishop in the hands of the magistrate; James M. Kittelson, *Wolfgang Capito: From Humanist to Reformer* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 199-204.

⁵⁶ Greschat (1994), 21-4.

distinguished the 'twofold government in man'.⁵⁷ The magistrate remains keeper of both tables of the law: from 1539, the *Institutes* envisaged civil government as providing that 'a public manifestation of religion may exist among Christians, and that humanity may be maintained among men'.⁵⁸ Like Martyr, Calvin sees the magistrate as God's appointed vicar, has a preference for an aristocratic form of government, and relates the exercise of authority closely to law.⁵⁹ To resist civil rule, however unjust, is to oppose God. Nevertheless, citing like Martyr the example of the ephors of Sparta, Calvin holds that an inferior magistrate should resist a king whose rule is oppressive.⁶⁰

For Calvin, piety is the first concern of government. Rulers are to see that God is worshipped according to divine law.⁶¹ Like Martyr, he observes that civil and ecclesiastical power have different purposes as well as distinct instruments. But Martyr's stress on the magistrate's responsibility to see that each man, including each minister, fulfils his function is muted in Calvin. In particular, authority to exercise discipline is an inalienable part of the spiritual jurisdiction: to seek magisterial involvement is to cede to the ruler the 'office of the church'.⁶² The magistrate has a duty to recognise and support the jurisdiction of the church, but not to share in it. This is a difference of emphasis rather than substance, however. Whereas Martyr's writings are generally optimistic of the potential for magisterial engagement, the *Institutes* are more cautious, perhaps reflecting Calvin's contention for ecclesiastical autonomy in Geneva.⁶³

These affinities with Bucer and Calvin highlight Martyr's differences with Zürich. Despite his regard for Bullinger and appointment in the *Schola Tigurina*, Martyr's conception of the responsibilities of minister and magistrate was different from the pattern which emerged in Zürich and other Swiss cities. The identification of the church with the civil community, rooted in the city's late-medieval history and given theological endorsement by Zwingli, was not Martyr's vision.⁶⁴ Bullinger's conviction

⁵⁷ CR 29: 1076-7; *Inst*, IV.19.15.

⁵⁸ CR 29: 1102; *Inst*, IV.20.3.

⁵⁹ CR 29: 1104-6, 1110-11; *Inst*, IV.20.6-8, 14; unlike Martyr, Calvin can envisage a mixed form of secular government.

⁶⁰ CR 29: 1116-24; *Inst*, IV.20.23-32; LC IV.20.12, scholion *An subditis liceat contra suos principes insurgere* from commentary on Judges 3.29-30, *Iud*, 64^v-65^r.

⁶¹ CR 29: 1106-7; *Inst*, IV.20.9.

⁶² CR 29: 648-9; *Inst*, IV.11.3-4.

⁶³ Wendel (1965), 308-9.

⁶⁴ On Zürich's self-perception as a *corpus Christianum*, and Zwingli's correlation of citizenship with piety, on an Augustinian foundation, R.C. Walton, 'The Institutionalisation of the Reformation at Zürich', *Zwingliana* 13 (1972), 498, 501-2.

that since the magistrate was responsible for maintaining good and repelling evil in the community, church discipline was a matter for the civil power, was particularly alien.⁶⁵ If his understanding of the relationship of church and state bears resemblance to the early views of Wolfgang Musculus, who drew on both Bucer and Zwingli, he did not follow Musculus' journey to a position where the church became an arm of the state.⁶⁶ We shall see how in the 1551 *De excommunicatione* scholion he rejects the argument that where the civil authority is Christian, responsibility for church discipline belongs to the magistrate rather than the church. However, disagreement over the role of the magistrate was more manageable for the reformers than, for example, the persistence of more divisive differences over the sacraments. Bullinger was to support Calvin in his final struggle with the Perrinists, in the interests of solidarity and despite Zürich's aversion to the consistorial system.⁶⁷ Martyr himself was clearly delighted to find refuge in Zürich after his uncomfortable second spell in Strasbourg.

The Polity of the Church

Introduction: Gifts and Order

Although Martyr's works include distinct treatments of, for example, headship in the church, they lack a sustained exposition of its government. Further, the task of identifying the structure of his thought from the often terse comments scattered throughout his works is compounded by two inherent tensions.

First is the relationship between his commitment to order and his belief in the diversity of ministerial gifts. Martyr is in principle clear that Christ has provided an order for the church, which is to be found in Scripture. Since Christ as the church's head governs

⁶⁵ On Bullinger's views, and the resistance of Swiss cities and their reformers to the alternative approach to discipline emanating from Strasbourg and especially Geneva, J. Wayne Baker, 'Christian Discipline, Church and State, and Toleration: Bullinger, Calvin, & Basel 1530-55', in *Reformiertes Erbe: Festschrift für Gottfried W. Locher zu seinem 80 Geburtstag*, eds. H.A. Oberman, et al, *Zwingliana* 19 (1992), I, 35-48. On Bullinger's position in 1568, J Wayne Baker, 'In defence of magisterial discipline: Bullinger's "Tractatus de excommunicatione" of 1568', in *Heinrich Bullinger 1504-78: Gesammelte Aufsätze zum 400. Todestag*, eds. Ulrich Gäbler and Erland Herkenrath (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1975), 141-59.

⁶⁶ James T. Ford, 'Wolfgang Musculus and the Office of the Christian Magistrate', *ARG* 91 (2000), 164-66.

⁶⁷ Baker (1992), 41-4.

it through his ministers, its order primarily concerns the institution of ministry. This is primarily described in Ephesians 4.11: the order this verse prescribes is normative for Martyr.⁶⁸ Moreover, to the charge that the reformers have introduced disorder into the church, he replies that they have rather restored the scriptural order.⁶⁹ However, Martyr's concept of the church's offices is fluid: the fourfold ministry of pastors, doctors, elders and deacons, already adopted by Calvin in his *Ecclesiastical Ordinances*, is glimpsed but indistinctly. He does not attempt to harmonise the offices described in different passages of Scripture into a monolithic blueprint.

Second, he is often satisfied with the assimilation of the biblical material for church government to the Aristotelian three-fold classification of polities. For Martyr, the Aristotelian model, a commonplace in sixteenth-century political thought, helpfully accommodated the diversity both of contemporary practice and of Scripture. He felt no necessity to outline a more detailed interpretation.

The polity of the church, he recognises, is unlike that of the state. Whereas princes inculcate virtue by law-making and wielding the sword, righteousness and the Spirit of God are acquired otherwise. The government of the church is a spiritual matter, by which God's gifts are distributed and retained in the church by ministry, and especially by preaching the word.⁷⁰ The church is accordingly well-ordered when the ministry envisaged by the New Testament is exercised. At the beginning of his Romans commentary, Martyr compares the church to a city, whose unity depends on each citizen discharging his particular office. The purpose is that 'by these mutual offices, Christians should be so bound together, that the Spirit and grace of God should spread from one member to another, by joints and sinews together, as is written unto the Colossians and unto the Ephesians'.⁷¹

Commenting on Romans 12.4-8, he develops this observation, explaining that the passage refers to the public ministries and functions of the church. Believers do not

⁶⁸ CP IV.3.2,

⁶⁹ *Def*, 207: Haec tu ita scribis Inconstanti, quasi nos in Ecclesiis nostris tali utamur confusione: Atqui nos ordinem in sacris literis institutum, quia possumus maxime, et diligentissime retinemus. ('Inconstantius' in this work is a reference to Gardiner).

⁷⁰ LC IV.3.2; *Sam*, 49^r: Longe enim hic alia ratio est, atque in Republica. Nam Ecclesia est corpus coeleste, divinum, spirituale. Sensus in eam a nullo homine mortali conferri potest. Ea enim quae ad sensum Ecclesiae pertinent, sunt eiusmodi, quae nec auris audivit, nec oculos vidit, nec in cor hominis ascenderunt. Motus enim Ecclesiae manat omnis a spiritu sancto.

⁷¹ *Rom*, 16; *Romans*, 11^r.

have the same gifts and no member ought to usurp the office of another. The purpose of their exercise, however, is the common good. These gifts of ministry fall into two categories. They are either prophetic, pertaining to doctrine or exhortation and related to the soul, or diaconal, concerned with meeting bodily needs or with restraining vice. This categorisation is more important than the particular offices: some gifts are closely related to others and may even be exercised by the same person. However, Martyr does not specify that all the gifts pertain to discrete offices. Prophecy, for example, is distinguished from its Old Testament meanings and defined as comprising doctrine and exhortation, neither of which are identified with named offices. The 'office of deacons' is specifically associated with the distribution of alms, but showing mercy to strangers and the sick is said to be 'the office of widows and old men'. Presbyteral office, on the other hand, embraces both prophetic and diaconal functions. 'Elder' is a title which he recognises the New Testament uses for the distinct, prophetic office of teaching. However, the task of 'ruling', especially in its disciplinary aspects, also pertains to elders, but is diaconal.⁷²

Martyr refers to these injunctions in Romans 12 as 'this governance of the church'. However, he identifies no polity or order. Rather, he comments 'I doubt not that there were many kinds of government in the church'.⁷³ His reluctance to identify the offices as essential elements of a fixed order is confirmed by comparison of this treatment with his exposition of I Corinthians 12.28. Here the text leads him to make a different distinction, between foundational and permanent ministries within the church. The apostles and prophets fall into the first category: they were God's provision for the first generation of the church. However, when Martyr turns to the offices which are intended to be permanent, and correspond to the Romans 12 list, the prophetic and diaconal classification is not mentioned. Rather, he simply comments on the gifts as the verse lists them. Doctors are those who teach in the churches, as well as in the schools which cathedrals are expected to maintain. Helpers (*opitulaciones*), though described as an 'order', comprise a broad category embracing several diaconal functions including care for neighbours, alms distribution, and the relief of the needy. Though Paul does not mention pastors, and Martyr makes no attempt to identify them in the verse, they are mentioned in his comments on *gubernaciones*, who are described as sharing the government of the church with the pastor. The former constitute the 'senate of the

⁷² *Rom*, 623-7; *Romans*, 416^v-18^v.

⁷³ *Rom*, 626; *Romans*, 418^r-v.

parish', and the pastor corresponds to the consul.⁷⁴ This recalls a description of the twofold eldership, using the same classical parallel, in Martyr's comments on excommunication in chapter five.⁷⁵ However, in the later passage discipline is identified with a further ministry, that of *potestates seu virtutes*.

No attempt is made to harmonise these variations in treatment either within the Corinthians work or in the subsequent Romans commentary. It is clear that Martyr understood the New Testament to endorse a plurality of ministries rather than the traditional hierarchy with its distinction between clergy and people. However, his treatments of the variety of gifts in these passages does not suggest that he saw it commending a fixed number of offices. Within parameters which included some distinctions between teaching, ruling, and practical care and relief, and saw pastor and elders as central, the New Testament expressed a flexibility in the manifestation of these gifts with which Martyr was content. While the exercise of the biblical gifts are essential for the church's government, they can be discharged in a variety of forms.

This understanding enabled Martyr to make flexible use of the Aristotelian model, which for him corresponds sufficiently closely both to the biblical evidence and contemporary practice to be a convenient explanatory tool. Employed descriptively of what he observes in both Old Testament history and apostolic instruction, the model shapes his entire approach to the question. It is particularly valuable in accommodating his attachment to a 'democratic' ideal, in which he saw authority in the church flowing from Christ through the whole community.⁷⁶ It provided him with a convenient heuristic device. Since it is the dominant motif in most of his discussions of church government, the following outline adopts its structure.

⁷⁴ *Cor*, 182^f: Qui hoc dono sunt ornati, apti sunt ad regendum, et politica recte prudenterque noverunt tractare. Nam et Ecclesia Christi suam πολιτειαν habet. Et quia unus pastor omnia per seipsum obire non potest, adiungebantur ei antiquitus ex populo aliqui seniores, periti et scientes rerum spiritualium, qui erant parrochiae quodammodo senatus. Hi cum pastore deliberabant de Ecclesiae cura atque instauratione. Cuius rei Ambrosius super epistolam ad Timotheum meminit. Inter istos pastor ne quaquam potestate tyrannica, sed ceu consul senatoribus anteibat.

⁷⁵ *Cor*, 62^v.

⁷⁶ Martyr, *Proposita ex IIII et V capite libri Levitici*, N. 6: Potestatis Ecclesiasticae plenitudo est in Christo, qui hanc communicavit universitati fidelium, et ipsa executionem illis tribuit ministris a se electis. *LC* 1033; *PML* 1: 155.

One head, many ministers

Martyr's preference for a threefold model of church government first appears in the 1551 Corinthians commentary. A single paragraph of the *De excommunicatione* scholion makes this distinctive contribution to Reformed ecclesiological thought. The question of the authority to excommunicate gives rise to a discussion of the nature of the church's polity. Martyr's conclusion is that it is not simple but is composed of Aristotle's three types: monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. The church includes all three. It qualifies as a monarchy since Christ is king. Second, since Christ has delegated his rule to a number of offices in the church, it is also an aristocracy, comprising bishops, presbyters, doctors and other rulers. Finally, on the basis of the practice of the New Testament church, the most weighty decisions, notably excommunication, absolution and the choice of ministers, lie beyond the competence of such leaders acting alone, and are the province of the whole congregation. The church thus includes a democratic or 'politic' element.⁷⁷ As a mixed form of government the church accordingly most closely resembles the Roman republic, with its provisions for Dictatorship, rule by the Senate, and reservation of the most serious issues and the confirmation of legislation to the tribunes of the people. This suggests a sympathy for an 'ascending' theory of sovereignty, though Martyr shows little interest in developing a comprehensive account of political authority.

⁷⁷ *Cor*, 67^v-68^f: Ut autem recte intelligamus quis nam excommunicare debeat, opus est excutere societatem ecclesiae cuiusmodi sit. Non est simplex, verum ex Monarchia, Aristocratia et Democratia composita. Removendae quippe ab illa sunt perniciosae species rerum publicarum, Tyrannis (inquam) Oligarchia et corruptus populi dominatus. Christum si respexeris, Monarchia dicetur. Nam ipse est rex noster, qui sanguine suo Ecclesiam sibi acquisivit. Iam abiit in coelum, regit attamen hoc suum regnum: non quidem visibili praesentia, sed spiritu et verbo sacrarum literarum. Sunt vero in Ecclesia qui legatione funguntur pro eo episcopi, presbyteri, doctores et alii qui praesunt, quorum merito potest dici Aristocratia. Nam gubernationi Ecclesiarum qui praeficiuntur, tantummodo propter insignia dona Dei, quoad doctrinam et puritatem vitae, sunt ad istos gradus promovendi. Non committuntur ista munera iuxta divitiarum et census aestimationem, non ex gratia, forma et nobilitate, sed ex meritis et virtutibus: quod si non fiat, contra regulam agitur. Sed quoniam in ecclesia de negotiis gravioribus et quae sunt maximi momenti, ad plebem refertur (ut patet in Actis Apostolicis) ideo politiae rationem habet. Maximi autem ponderis habentur excommunicatio, absolutio, ministrorum electio et alia huiusmodi. Unde concluditur: non absque consensu Ecclesiae quempiam excommunicari posse. Hoc pacto se habuit respub. Romana. Miseris et difficillimis temporibus Dictatorem creabat, qui ut monarchia se habuit. Senatum praeterea cooptabat, virtutes et merita ponderando, quo pacto Aristocratia dici potuit: caeterum in rebus gravissimis et legibus ac decretis confirmandis ad Quirites referebat, quo pacto democratia iudicabatur.

Martyr's thought on the exclusive headship of Christ is developed primarily in passages criticising papal claims, and is related to his doctrines of union with Christ and the church as his body. *Loci* in the Judges and Samuel commentaries expand his teaching on Christ's headship as the source of the body's life.⁷⁸ The language of 'joints and sinews' from Ephesians 4.15-16 and Colossians 2.19 recurs in these passages as he argues that only Christ is referred to as the head of the church in the New Testament, and that this corresponds to the nature of the church. Spiritual life can be derived only from a spiritual head: 'in the church men treat not of civil life, but of spiritual and eternal life, which we cannot look for but at God's hand, neither can any mortal man quicken the members of the church'.⁷⁹

Christ's ascension does not hinder the continued exercise of his headship, for by his Spirit and grace and through providence he remains for ever in the church, as the words of the great commission (Matthew 28.18-20) announce. Moreover, he is not without the means of exercising his rule, since he left his word.⁸⁰ No spiritual head is therefore necessary on earth. The divine provision for the administration of ecclesiastical power is rather the administration of word and sacrament through the ministers of the church:

But that there should be one man to govern all the rest, neither is it necessary, neither ought it to be suffered: because (as I have said) the head is from whence life and spirit is derived into all the body. And such a head is Christ only. And we must mark the institution of God, who would have many ministers in the church.⁸¹

The idea that one man could in any case govern so extensive a realm as the whole church is in any case absurd, argues Martyr. No temporal state has ever achieved this. Rule by one man is no more necessary for the church than for a nation: 'Cannot Helvetia be safe without a king?'⁸²

Martyr marshals a number of other arguments in support of his repudiation of papal claims to headship. In one Judges scholion he includes a lengthy historical treatment of the issue. His objective is to demonstrate that the claim to headship is a late development in the history of the church. Gregory the Great and Cyprian are

⁷⁸ *Iud*, 105^v-108^r, 173^{r-v}; *Judges* 147^r-150^r, 241^{r-v}; *Sam*, 49^{r-v}.

⁷⁹ *Iud*, 106^v; *Judges*, 148^v.

⁸⁰ *CP* IV.3.2.9.

⁸¹ *Judges*, 241^r; *Iud*, 173^r.

⁸² *CP* IV.3.4, 9; *Sam*, 50^r, 51^r.

particularly cited. Martyr argues that Gregory's case against claims to a universal primacy by John, patriarch of Constantinople, rested on Gregory's explicit assumption that the church has no universal bishop. Further, John's claim to supremacy over the Emperor was repudiated by Gregory. Papal claims to ecclesiastical supremacy and temporal power are therefore an innovation.⁸³

Cyprian is cited for his resistance to Rome's claim to hear and decide appeals from other provinces of the church. Martyr concedes that Cyprian 'reverenced the church of Rome and acknowledged it as the womb [matrix] in these our regions'.⁸⁴ Alluding to 1 Peter 5.2-3, he agrees that it is appropriate to honour such ministry provided it takes its pattern from the example and instruction of Christ. To grant it dominion over all other church rulers is not, however, justified. Cyprian's success in resisting the Roman claim to jurisdiction demonstrates that papal primacy was a subsequent development.⁸⁵ A similar argument is deployed in the I Samuel scholion. Appeals to Rome for help and counsel developed on account of the sanctity and learning of individual popes, rather than a permanent primacy. The attitude to papal advice displayed in eastern church councils shows it was not considered binding. Those who are more learned and spiritual may be accorded priority in the counsels of the church, but rule by a single man is not in accordance with Scripture's provision.⁸⁶

Martyr also deals with the biblical texts most frequently cited in support of papal headship in the church, Matthew 16.18-19, and John 21.15-18. Both uses are invalid. The Matthew 'keys' verses, he argues, are addressed to Peter in his representative character of all who confess Christ. The Johannine passage follows Peter's denial and similarly represents his restoration to the ministry he shared with all the apostles, rather than the gift of a unique primacy.⁸⁷ In a second Judges scholion, Peter is described as representative in both passages. Indeed, on the basis of Revelation 21.14, all the apostles may be said to be the church's foundation. If Peter was 'in some way after Christ the foundation of the church' it was on the basis of being one of their

⁸³ *Iud*, 105^v-106^r; *Judges*, 147^r-148^r; Gregory, *Ep* V.18, *PL* 77:738-51.

⁸⁴ *Iud*, 105^v-106^r; *Judges*, 147^r-148^r. The reference from Cyprian is from his account of instructing travellers to recognise Cornelius and not his rival, *Ep*. 48.3, *CSEL* 3: 607; *ANCL* 8: 120. Cf also Cyprian, *De unitate*, 6, 10, in *De lapsis and De ecclesiae catholicae unitate*, ed. M. Bévenot (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971); G.S.M. Walker, *The Churchmanship of Cyprian* (London: Lutterworth, 1968), 48-9.

⁸⁵ *Iud*, 106^{r-v}; *Judges*, 148^v.

⁸⁶ *LC* IV.3.9; this appears to be in particular a reference to the treatment of the *Tome* of Leo.

⁸⁷ *Iud*, 107^{r-v}; *Judges*, 149^{r-v}.

number rather than through a unique personal office.⁸⁸

Martyr therefore opposes papal claims to be the visible head of the church on both exegetical and historical grounds. His doctrine of the essentially spiritual nature of the church, together with his understanding of Christ's headship, excludes an earthly primacy. Martyr is satisfied that the practice of the early church was substantially consistent with these conclusions from Scripture. The papacy's claims were accordingly indefensible: the monarchical element in the church's government belongs exclusively to Christ.

Elders, bishops and councils

Though Martyr's characterisation of the church as an aristocracy exists in some tension with his thought on the church's offices, it is one of the most consistent features of his approach. It serves the polemical purpose of denying papal claims to juridical primacy, but also describes an order divine in its origin:

Neither undoubtedly is it lawful to change the order appointed by God. For God would that in the Church there should be a government of the best men, that Bishops should take charge of all these things, and should choose Ministers, yet so, as the voice of the people should not be excluded.⁸⁹

The participation of the people is important, but the aristocratic element in the church's government is primary: 'Let the government be aristocracy, which order always seemed the best', he argues. Since the church was initially governed by the twelve apostles, this order has dominical authority: 'We will have aristocracy kept in it, as Christ has instituted'.⁹⁰ In both the apostolic era and the early church, he observes, conciliar government was therefore the norm, and Martyr aspires to this aristocratic polity in his

⁸⁸ *Iud*, 173^v; *Judges*, 241^v.

⁸⁹ *Sam*, 49^v: Neque enim licet mutare ordinem a Deo institutum. Deus enim voluit in Ecclesia esse Aristocratiam, ut episcopi ista omnia curarent, et ministros deligerent, ita tamen, ut ne populis suffragia excluderentur. *LC* IV.3.3.

⁹⁰ *Iud*, 173^{r-v}; *Judges*, 241^r.

own day.⁹¹

Though he rarely discusses the relationship of aristocracy and eldership, they are connected in his thought. Martyr specifically employs the language of eldership to refer to the aristocratic element, and understands the government of the church both locally and nationally in these terms. In the Samuel scholion on headship, it is the *seniores* who provide 'in what order all things ought to be done', while the magistrate ensures compliance. If the magistrate fails in his duty to supervise religion, 'yet there is a church, there be elders, there be bishops: by these it must be decreed and appointed what ought to be done in religion'.⁹² In this passage the use of 'elder' and 'bishop' appear synonymous, and principally relate to government beyond the local congregation. When Martyr specifically discusses eldership, however, it is however, normally in the context of congregational ministry, and particularly with reference to the disciplinary function. In both the Romans and Corinthians commentaries, it is in discussing discipline that Martyr distinguishes between teaching and ruling elders, citing I Timothy 5.7 in support. Lay elders are 'helpers to the pastors' and 'governors of the church', particularly in the ministry of discipline. The terminology of aristocracy applies equally at the local level: together, the elders constitute the 'senate' of the church.⁹³ Thus the church's constitution at every level embodies the aristocratic principle.

For Martyr a form of episcopacy was the divinely-appointed means of this aristocratic order in the church at large. His writings contain no alternative prescription for the church's polity. Nevertheless, his conception of episcopal office is flexible. He identifies it neither with the historic succession nor with the juridical institution. Bucer's ministry in Strasbourg illustrates this:

I always saw him busy, not about his personal concerns but about things by which he could help his neighbours: in continuous sermons, in rightly administering church business so that pastors might direct the souls entrusted to them by the word of God and strengthen them by holy examples, in checking on the schools so that all the work

⁹¹ *Sam*, 51^f: *Romanae et Atheniens. Respublicae optime regebantur, et erant florentissime, cum administrarentur a senatoribus. Potest ergo in Ecclesia aristocratia, ut omnia instituantur, et regantur in conciliis, ut olim inter duodecim apostolos, et in veteri Ecclesia factum est. CP* IV.3.9.

⁹² *CP* IV.3.6; *Sam*, 50^f: *Tamen est Ecclesia, sunt seniores, sunt episcopi: ab istis statui et decerni debet, quid in religione fieri oporteat.*

⁹³ *Rom*, 626; *Romans*, 418^{r-v}; *Cor*, 62^v.

expended there is related to promoting the Gospel and helping the church, in speeches in which he assiduously stirred and inflamed the magistrates to Christian godliness . . . This is the duty of a pastor, this is that episcopal dignity as described by Paul in his letters to Timothy and Titus.⁹⁴

This is a revealing passage. Many of Martyr's references to the episcopate arise in the context of his denial of papal monarchy. Their stress tends to fall on the polity of the universal church, and on the need for conciliar decision-making within the bounds of Scripture. But this letter describes the essence of episcopal office. It is Bucer's combination of pastoral work with the supervision of the ecclesial life of the whole town of Strasbourg, which constitutes genuine episcopal ministry. Oversight of the spiritual life of a territory and its churches qualified him as biblically episcopal.⁹⁵

This pastoral dimension of episcopal office is highlighted in Martyr's comments on I Corinthians 6.4. A bishop's principal duty is to preach the word. The subordination of this ministry to his judicial and legislative roles is unjustifiable. Bishops are to follow the example of the apostles, whose priority was to preach the gospel throughout the world. Church government cannot be neglected, but it must not hinder the ministry of the word.⁹⁶ The 1559 *Defensio* indicates the continuing importance of this emphasis. Responding to Gardiner's charge that the reformers had introduced disorder and confusion into the church by abolishing its ancient order, he answers that episcopacy has not been shunned. Rather, it is exercised in accordance with apostolic teaching. Though scripturally, bishops and presbyters are not different orders, yet each diocese or city possesses a 'superintendent' chosen from among the pastors, who exercises an episcopal ministry, maintaining unity and governing the church according to the word of God. This means of appointment, he argues, is consistent with the apostolic instruction in Titus, as followed by Jerome. The reformed churches have hence not abandoned apostolic order, but rather, as he would argue later in the *De schismate* scholion, have

⁹⁴ LC 1071; PML 5: 97.

⁹⁵ Spini (1958), 69-70, suggests that Martyr's description of Bucer's ministry as genuinely episcopal is related to early sixteenth century moves to reform clerical practice in Italy, and specifically to Contarini's 1517 *De Officio Episcopi*. On the latter, see S.D. Boyd, 'The Contemplatives in Action: Vincenzo Querini, Gasparo Contarini, and the Shaping of Politics in Renaissance Italy' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1998), 144-56.

⁹⁶ *Cor*, 71^{r-v}, including: Quo loco vehementer dolendum est, patres ita deceptos, ut a primaria functione administrandi verbi Dei se paterentur abstrahi ad causas iudicandas, quasi hoc lege divina, et his Apostoli verbis praeceptum esset. Cum alibi apostolus dixerit: Nemo militans Deo, implicat se negotiis huius vitae. Fortasse dicent, componere discordantes non esse rem a Paulo prohibitam, potissimum cum fiat in Ecclesia, et ex charitate. Quod non negamus, sed id contendimus, ei negotio non adeo dandam esse operam, ut Evangelii praedicatio impediatur.

returned to it.⁹⁷ They stand in the true apostolic succession, which is in the teaching of the apostles.⁹⁸ Elsewhere, Martyr alludes without demur to the princely appointment of bishops, and to the magistrate's duty to see that episcopal functions are properly discharged: the exercise of oversight was more significant than the precise means of its provision.⁹⁹

In both the Corinthians and Romans commentaries, Martyr compares apostolic and episcopal ministry partly to refute papal pretensions to apostolic status, distinguishing unique attributes of the apostles' ministry from transmissible aspects. Thus, bishops succeeded the apostles in their function as governors of the churches, but they have not inherited all their authority. The apostles were involved in constituting the gospel and the teaching of Scripture; but episcopacy was instituted to defend them. Further, neither the miraculous evidences of the apostles' authority, nor the Spirit-inspired inerrancy of their writings, are part of the ministry of bishops. Their role is rather to be guardians of Scripture. An appropriate model for their ministry is accordingly the example of those church fathers who occupied episcopal office, and who held that they were no more than interpreters of Scripture. Further, the history of church councils reveals that the acts and decisions of bishops are not free from error, demonstrating

⁹⁷ *Def*, 208: Nos confusionem in Ecclesia nec moliri, nec ferre, satis iam ostensum est. Quod autem Inconstantius episcoporum, et presbyterorum, ordinationem refert ad Paulum, id nostrae causae nihil obest. Mentionem quidem facit Paulus episcoporum, et presbyterorum, sed illos diversos ordines esse non docuit: si credimus Hieronymo. Is enim ait, Ex multis presbyteris unum delectum fuisse in Concilio, qui caeteris dignitate, non ordine, anteiret; idque ad unitatem Ecclesiae conservandam: scilicet, ne Christi corpus distraheretur. Idque probat ex epistola ad Titum. Tantum autem abest, ut nos confusionem in Ecclesiam invehamus, ut hanc potius eandem rationem sequamur. Nulla est enim apud nos diocesis, aut Civitas, ubi non e multis pastoribus deligatur quispiam, doctrina, et experientia excellens, quem Ecclesiae superintendentem vocant. Ille caeteros omnes congregat, regit iuxta verbum dei: prout rerum status exigit. The reference to Jerome is to Ep. 146.1, *PL* 22: 1193-4: Quodam postea unus electus est, qui caeteris praeponeretur, in schismatis remedium factum est; ne uniusquisque ad se trahens Christi Ecclesiam rumperet.

⁹⁸ *Def*, 209. Martyr does not develop his comment that there is no separate episcopal order in ministry. In a comment from *De Votis*, included in the *Loci Communes*, he suggests in controversy with those who argue for a multiplicity of clerical orders, that there are only three to be seen in the New Testament: bishops, elders and deacons. *CP* IV.4.24.

⁹⁹ *Romans*, 431^r.

that their office is distinct from that of the inerrant apostles.¹⁰⁰ In the *De schismate* scholion Martyr similarly observes that Ephesians 4.11 distinguishes apostles from pastors. The role of the apostles was to spread the gospel and plant churches throughout the world. They were not bishops in particular places. 'But the function of bishops requires that they stay in their churches and continually feed the sheep entrusted to their oversight'.¹⁰¹

Conciliar church government furnishes Martyr with a further example of the aristocratic principle, derived from apostolic practice. This feature of the apostles' ministry was transmissible, and has been inherited by the episcopate. In the Corinthians commentary, with the Council of Trent in mind, Martyr disparages the notion that conciliar doctrinal pronouncements have authority, citing Augustine in support.¹⁰² But he does suggest that councils can legitimately exercise discipline. Further, the Jerusalem church's endorsement of Paul's teaching in Galatians 2.1-10 is evidence for a conciliar role in creating a consensus on the truth of the Scriptures.¹⁰³

This understanding of councils as the forum where the churches consult together on the government of the universal church becomes characteristic of Martyr's thought. In principle, he has a high view of the authority of councils provided they remain loyal to Scripture. The *De schismate* scholion observes that though the record of church councils is not encouraging, their decisions have inerrant authority when they are in accordance with the word of God. Further, Martyr argues at length that from as early as the Acts 15 Jerusalem Council, church councils have never been exclusively episcopal. Imperial

¹⁰⁰ *Rom*, 6-7: Verum est, Apostolos discedentes ex hoc mundo reliquisse episcopos gubernatores Ecclesiarum. Sed quod eadem aut pari autoritate praediti sint episcopi Apostolis surrogati, enixe pernegamus: atque id hac ratione probamus: primum quod Apostolos videmus ad id fuisse delectos, ut cultum Evangelii constituerunt, et quae a Christo audierunt, credentibus promulgarent. At episcopi eo sunt instituti, ut tueantur ea quae in Evangelio, et sacris literis continentur: quae sic tuenda suscipiant, ut illis non addant nova, et traditiones fingant pro suo arbitrio. . . . Unde concludimus, Apostolos non potuisse in his quae scripserunt errare: Episcopos vero saepe male statuisse, quoad dogmata, videmus, ut patet in Ariminensi concilio, necnon in secunda synodo Ephesina, et in plerisque aliis. Quin et in actionibus permultum quoque aberrarunt; *Cor*, 182^{r-v}, including: Quo ad auctoritatem, fatemur episcopos quoquo modo succedere Apostolis, sed non quoad summam potestatem per omnia loca.

¹⁰¹ *Mel*, 106^v; *PML* 1: 192.

¹⁰² *Cor*, 26^v; Augustine, *Adversus Maximinum Arrianorum episcopum*, 3; *PL* 42: 711.

¹⁰³ *Cor*, 27^r (mis-numbered 25^r in the 1572 edition): Nam si reprehenderint, excommunicaverint, aut absoluerint ex verbo Dei atque ex vi Spiritus, una precati fuerint, non irrita et absque fructu haec erunt. [. . .] Si hoc studio haberentur interdum concilia, ut omnes ecclesiae consensum in veritate Scripturarum agnoscerent, ferri utique possent.

participation was frequent and sometimes decisive in the early church, and laymen who speak from the Scriptures have more authority than a pope who ignores them. Nevertheless, since bishops constitute the aristocracy of the church, Martyr assumes that councils will be predominantly episcopal. Bishops are described as representative of the church in such assemblies. Though this dimension of ecclesiastical order is not a prominent element of Martyr's thought, such occasional references to conciliar government suggest that this is the forum in which the aristocratic element of the church's polity finds its principal expression beyond the level of the national or local church.¹⁰⁴

Though apostolic teaching and practice is normative in these discussions, Martyr also appeals to the example of the early church. In particular, he displays a sympathy for aspects of Cyprian's thought on episcopacy. Surprisingly, and unlike Calvin, Martyr does not choose to cite Cyprian when he discusses the election of bishops.¹⁰⁵ However, in the Samuel commentary, he twice endorses Cyprian's view that there is one episcopate in which each individual bishop shares. The appeal is made in order to deny that episcopal authority derives from the pope, especially in the case of judicial appeals. Martyr's primary concern is to show the papacy's claims to be bogus.¹⁰⁶ The same consideration applies in one of the *Judges loci*, where Martyr comments: 'it is sufficient for every Church to have his minister or Bishop, who may dispense the word of God and the sacraments, and retain discipline as much as may be'.¹⁰⁷ His concern is to deny the need for the supreme authority of one man, not to elaborate on the implications for episcopacy, but the passage reflects his acquaintance with Cyprian's teaching on the distinct flock of each place with its one pastor. Though there is no elaboration of the doctrine, Martyr clearly envisages the episcopate, whatever the mechanics of its appointment, as a divinely authorised means of oversight in the church's local and universal manifestations.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ *Mel*, 104^r-105^v; *PML* 1: 180-9.

¹⁰⁵ *CR* 30: 794-5; *Inst*, IV.4.10, citing Cyprian, *Eps.* 38.1, 67.5; *CSEL* 3: 579-80, 739-40; *ANCL* 8: 93-4, 239-40; Walker (1968), 67.

¹⁰⁶ *CP* IV.3.3, 8; *Sam*, 49^v: Itaque Cyprianus ait, unum episcopatum, cuius pars a singulis in solidum tenetur. The reference is to Cyprian, *De unitate*, 5: Episcopatus unus est cuius a singulis in solidum pars tenetur. Cyprian, ed. Bévenot (1971), 64. The wording is common in both the Primacy Text and Textus Receptus versions of the treatise, though since the former was not published until 1563, Martyr would have had access only to the latter.

¹⁰⁷ *Iud*, 173^{r-v}; *Judges*, 241^r.

¹⁰⁸ Cyprian, *De unitate*, 8: et posse uno in loco aliquis existimat aut multos pastores aut greges plures?

Consistent references to aristocracy and to the role of bishops in the government of the church thus reveal Martyr as the reformer of an existing order rather than as a radical innovator. Acting in their own territory as superintendents of the churches, collectively bishops constitute the councils in which issues of doctrine and discipline are discussed. Their existence is not an historical accident but a divine ordinance, notwithstanding the failure of most contemporary prelates to discharge their principal duty:

And they are to be marvelled at, who will be counted the successors of Peter and Paul, as the bishops of Rome and other bishops, how they see not, that they are debtors to preach Christ. For even from Gregory the Great, no man has in a manner ever seen that a bishop of Rome did preach. In Spain, in Italy, and in France they are altogether dumb. Here in England bishops do indeed preach sometime, but yet not so often as they ought.¹⁰⁹

The voice of the people

From the early *Una semplice dichiarazione* to the commentaries on Samuel and Kings, which stem from his lectures in Zürich, Martyr insists that the laity play an indispensable role in the legitimate exercise of ecclesiastical power. Historically, this is observable in the history of the church in both testaments. Theologically, it flows from the gift of the keys, the word of God, to the whole church. While Martyr clearly envisages ministerial oversight, it is nonetheless vital that the people are active in their functions. His attachment to this principle lends his thought a distinctively congregational flavour, which he clearly felt was consistent with his emphasis elsewhere on magisterial supervision and episcopal government.

The conviction that the keys are the possession of the whole church underlies Martyr's approach. This is apparent in his comments on the forgiveness of sins in the 1544 exposition of the creed: absolution is an act of the whole congregation, by virtue of its possession of the keys.¹¹⁰ In propositions for disputation from Leviticus dating from the same period, he reveals this attachment to an 'ascending' conception of authority in the church:

The fullness of ecclesiastical power is in Christ, who communicates it to the community of believers and through this has given its

¹⁰⁹ *Romans*, 13r. The language suggests this was written during Martyr's sojourn in Oxford.

¹¹⁰ *USD*, 156-7; *PML* 1: 72.

administration to those ministers chosen by it.¹¹¹

In later works, John 20.22 and Matthew 28.19 are cited as evidence that Christ endowed not Peter alone, but all believers with the power of the keys.¹¹² Aristocratic government is accordingly tempered by involvement of the people: 'God would that in the Church there should be a government of the best men, that Bishops should take charge of all these things, and should choose Ministers, yet so as the voice of the people should not be excluded'.¹¹³ This is how the church was governed in the golden age of the Judges, when the 'weightiest matters were referred to the people'.¹¹⁴ Further scriptural evidence for the role of the people, in this case in the selection of ministers, is adduced from the Acts of the Apostles. They were not only involved in the appointment of deacons: even the election of Matthias to apostolic office in Iscariot's place was similarly ratified.¹¹⁵

Martyr observes that the early church followed the same practice. In the *De excommunicatione* scholion, Martyr supports congregational involvement in church discipline, appealing to Cyprian and Augustine. The assumption underlying Cyprian's correspondence with Cornelius is that the forgiveness and restoration of a sinner requires the consent of the people to the case made by their bishop. He is not at liberty to offer pardon on his own authority.¹¹⁶ Similarly, Augustine mentions that when the people are in sympathy with the wrongdoer (in this case over Donatism), excommunication cannot be exercised because popular consent cannot be secured.¹¹⁷

¹¹¹ LC, 1033; PML 1: 155: Potestatis ecclesiasticae plenitudo est in Christo, qui hanc communicavit universitati fidelium, et ipsa executionem illis tribuit ministris a se electis.

¹¹² CP IV.3.4, Sam, 49^v: Sed obiciunt, Petro commisas esse claves. Imo illae datae sunt promiscue Apostolis omnibus. Dedit enim Christus spiritum sanctum omnibus, et omnibus dixit. Ite, praedicate, quae certe verae sunt claves ecclesiae; Iud, 107^r; Judges 149^r.

¹¹³ CP IV.3.3, Sam, 49^v: Neque enim licet mutare ordinem a Deo institutum. Deus enim voluit in Ecclesia esse Aristocratiam, ut episcopi ista omnia curarent, et ministros deligerent, ita tamen, ut ne populis suffragia excluderentur.

¹¹⁴ Iud, 1^v-2^r; Judges, 1^v, 2^v.

¹¹⁵ CP IV.3.3; Sam, 49^v: Deinde cum Matthias surrogandus esset in locum Iudae, cumque diaconi essent creandi, res referebatur, non ad papam, sed ad populum.

¹¹⁶ Cor, 68^r: Cyprianus ad Cornelium episcopum Romanum scribit. se multum apud plebem laborare, ut pax daretur lapsis, quam si per seipsum dare potuisset, non adeo oportuit in plebe persuadenda fatigaretur. Cyprian, Ep. 59.15; CSEL 3: 684-5; ANCL 8: 174-5.

¹¹⁷ Ibid: Et Augustinus idem ostendit adversus Donatistas, cum inquit ab excommunicatione tunc super sedendum, si plebs eodem vitio infecta fuerit. Quoniam (inquit) non assentietur excommunicationi, sed illum quem excommunicaveris, defendet ac tuebitur. Contra epistolam Parmeniani, IV.8, PL 43: 55-56.

Martyr concludes that these two cases are evidence that the early church followed apostolic practice and demonstrate that 'this right belongs to the church'.¹¹⁸

This congregational authority is required specifically in three areas: excommunication, absolution, and the choice of ministers.¹¹⁹ The first two are mentioned in his exposition of the creed, where absolution is particularly related to the reconciliation of the penitent excommunicate.¹²⁰ Congregational involvement in the appointment of ministers is consistent with a comment in the Samuel commentary, though Martyr does not indicate how he anticipates it to function.¹²¹ Discipline and the election of ministers are clearly the principal issues over which the people share the exercise of authority with bishops, ministers and elders; he does not develop the hint in the Corinthians commentary that there are further 'weighty matters' which require popular decision. The suggestion in the *Una semplice dichiarazione*, for example, that the making of ecclesiastical laws involves the whole church, finds no echo in later works.¹²² Where the involvement of secular rulers in the deliberations of church councils is endorsed, it is as office bearers rather than lay representatives.

In practice, as we shall see in the next chapter, Martyr expected the ministers and elders of the church to take the lead in matters where the whole congregation were to be involved. This was part of the ministerial function, the responsibility of aristocracy. Nevertheless, congregational participation was far from a formality. The people's withholding of consent to excommunicate, for example, would prevent its exercise. If he does not discuss in detail how such mixed government would operate, he was neither unaware of some of the practical difficulties that might arise, nor deterred by them from his commitment to the principle.

Ecclesiastical Laws

Ecclesiastical power for Martyr consists in administering the word of God on the

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*: Ius itaque hoc ad ecclesiam pertinet, neque ab illa eripi debet.

¹¹⁹ *Cor*, 68^r: Sed quoniam in ecclesia de negotiis gravioribus et quae sunt maximi momenti, ad plebem refertur (ut patet in Actis Apostolicis) ideo politiae rationem habet. Maximi autem ponderis habentur excommunicatio, absolutio, ministrorum electio et alia huiusmodi.

¹²⁰ *USD*, 155-6; *PML* 1: 71-2.

¹²¹ *Sam*, 49^v: Deus enim voluit in Ecclesia esse Aristocratiam, ut episcopi ista omnia curarent, et ministros deligerent, ita tamen, ut ne populis suffragia excluderentur.

¹²² *USD*, 144-5; *PML* 1: 68.

pattern of the threefold *notae ecclesiae*. Its exercise consists in preaching the word, administering the visible words of the sacraments, and conforming the lives of believers to the word through discipline. Nevertheless, he recognises that the church's life requires further ordering if these ends are to be attained. The provision of such outward order is therefore a fourth duty of church government. In the *Una semplice dichiarazione*, this is signalled at the end of the section dealing with the means of the church's growth and preservation:

Finally, this holy body of the church should by good and wise arrangements be maintained in its external activities, such as those related to the time and place of public worship, the praise of the Lord's name, thanksgiving to Christ for benefits enjoyed, and the reception of the holy sacraments.¹²³

I Corinthians 14.40 explicitly sanctions this regulative function. Such rules are to be agreed by the whole church. Once enacted, they are not immutable: the church can alter or jettison them if they no longer serve their purpose. Moreover, their use is hedged with warnings. They are to be enacted solely for the glory of God and the good of neighbour, not for any personal profit; nor are they to be over-numerous or burdensome. Laws should not remove the Christian's freedom or 'harm men's spiritual interests'. If these conditions are met, Christians should honour and accept what the church has decreed. Provisions made for their good are not to be held in contempt or disregarded.

This close association of ecclesiastical regulations with word, sacraments and discipline in 1544, is not repeated in later works. His view of the function of church law did not alter, but it is no longer treated as a means of the church's growth. In the excursus *De ciborum delectu* from the eighth chapter of his I Corinthians commentary, the church is still held to have power to make laws.¹²⁴ For the sake of order, matters indifferent to salvation may nevertheless be regulated by church decree.¹²⁵ This stems from the fact that the church is a human society, which requires good order to be established and maintained, especially in matters pertaining to public worship. Martyr attaches a list of conditions, similar to his 1544 cautions, adding that in the first place laws must not be contrary to the word of God. Indeed, neither the worship of God, justification, nor the remission of sins are matters for church law. No law must be enacted as if it were

¹²³ USD, 144-6; PML 1: 68-9.

¹²⁴ *Cor*, 108^v-112^v; LC III.5.10-24, especially 21-4.

¹²⁵ *Cor*, 108^v: Distinguemus itaque actiones, ut aliquae sint ad salutem necessariae, aliae vero ἀδιάφοραι sive mediae. Necessaria sunt quae Deus imperavit, et nisi ea praestemus exortes Dei et Christi erimus. In hoc rerum non est delectus.

necessary to salvation.¹²⁶ The scholion does not comment on the legislative process.

Martyr returned to the subject in a *locus* in the later Samuel commentary, *De legibus ecclesiasticis*.¹²⁷ There is evidence here of further reflection on the subject. He set himself to answer three questions: whether it was lawful for 'bishops and ecclesiastical men' to make laws; what sort they should be; and, whether they bind the conscience. On the latter point, he is unequivocal. The difference between civil and ecclesiastical law is that obedience to the magistrate is obligatory, for the sake of conscience, citing Romans 13.5. In the case of church law the conscience is not bound. Rather, the preservation of the church's order and the obligation of tranquillity is to determine the believer's obedience.¹²⁸

Though he cites them, Martyr declines to debate the assertions of both the canonists and Aquinas on the church's power to legislate. Ecclesiastical authority to make such decrees stems in his view from its character as a society (*coetus*). In its worship of God and in matters of salvation, it is ruled by the word of God. But there is also 'need of certain outward bounds, to the end that the fellowship of the people may be retained'. The covering of women's heads prescribed in I Corinthians 11.5, as well as the provisions of the Jerusalem council in Acts 15, fall into this category. The early church recognised the need to regulate such affairs: 'and always in councils after they had done with doctrine, they began to entreat of discipline'.¹²⁹ (The use of the latter term is a rare exception to the distinction Martyr normally maintains between the exercise of pastoral discipline, which relates to obedience to Scriptural precept, and the observation of ecclesiastical law.)

Martyr concludes that the church has a legislative power on the basis of Scripture, early

¹²⁶ *Cor*, 111^r: Ecclesiam dicunt facultatem habere condendi leges, quod ego non inficior, quandoquidem sumus homines, et opus est in operibus etiam quae ad cultum Dei pertinent, habeatur εὐταξία, propter quam alia decreta in Ecclesia statui posse concedimus.

¹²⁷ *CP* IV.4.1-5; *Sam*, 82^v-83^v. The scholion follows chapter fourteen. In the opening paragraph, explaining how the subject arises from his text, Martyr explains that it is necessary to understand the difference between civil and ecclesiastical laws; Masson omitted this comment from the *Loci Communes*.

¹²⁸ *CP* IV.4. 1, 5; *Sam*, 82^v, 83^v.

¹²⁹ *CP* IV. 2-3; *Sam*, 83^r: Positum ergo sit, licere ecclesiae scribere aut canones, aut leges, aut decreta, aut sanctiones, aut quocunque ea velis nomine appellari. Est enim coetus, et regi debet verbo Dei, praesertim quod attinet ad salutem ipsius, et cultum Dei. Sed sunt alia, quae tantum pertinent ad externam disciplinam. Ut enim populi societas contineatur, opus est quibusdam externis vinculis.

church precedent, and natural law. Though he does not develop the point, he indicates that this authority rests with the church's ministers: it is lawful 'for bishops and ecclesiastical men to set forth such manner of laws and decrees'.¹³⁰ The example of the early church suggests that it is a collective function. However, since it is not necessary for laws to be identical throughout the churches, they may vary from place to place. Comments of Jerome and Ambrose supporting local autonomy are cited in support.¹³¹

This scholion dates from Martyr's final years in Zürich. His library now included a number of recent collections and commentaries on canon law, and as we shall see, he had been intimately involved with the attempt to endow England with a new code of ecclesiastical legislation. In the light of both, it is not surprising to find that he now envisages that ecclesiastical law should cover matters of doctrine as well as the adiaphora of church government, though its doctrinal precepts, he stipulates, should not require anything which is not justified from scripture. Decrees relating to government, on the other hand, are of two kinds. Some relate to salvation and belong to the category of necessity. These require explicit biblical sanction; Martyr does not illustrate his analysis with examples, and his meaning remains somewhat obscure. The second type, which is the specific concern of the scholion, covers matters which in their own nature are indifferent 'the which we may use either well or ill'. Their use is governed by the same considerations Martyr had outlined in 1544 and 1551. He is careful to caution his hearers that they pertain only to good order: 'they will make ill men no better'. They should be quickly removed whenever they no longer serve their purpose.¹³²

Martyr in Context

Among his contemporaries, Martyr's thought on church government is singular on two counts. His attachment to the congregational principle is one. At a time when sympathy with this notion was being tempered with caution in practise, Martyr's continued advocacy of congregational participation in decisions over discipline and

¹³⁰ CP IV.4, 1; *Sam*, 82^v.

¹³¹ CP IV.4.4; *Sam*, 83^v: In his rebus, inquit Hieronymus, abundet quaevis provincia in sensu suo. Et Ambrosius quemadmodum citatur ab Augustino ad Ianuarium, Si non vultis errare, facite, inquit, quod ego soleo. Ego enim ad quancunque ecclesiam venio, ad eius ceremonias me accommo. Jerome, *Ep*. 71.6, *PL* 22: 672; Augustine, *Ep*. 54.3, *CSEL*, 34: 160-2, citing Ambrose, *Ep*. 18, *PL* 16: 971-82.

¹³² CP IV.4.4; *Sam*, 82^v.

order was distinctive. Second, however familiar was Aristotle's threefold description of polities, Martyr's interpretation of the biblically-favoured form of church government as a composite of the philosopher's categories was unusually pronounced for his day. He seized on the model as an explanatory schema for the pattern he observed in Scripture, and with a pronounced priority for the aristocratic element, it became the touchstone for his approach to the subject.

In other respects, Martyr's reflections on the church's polity are representative of his generation, notably in his view of episcopacy. Significant antipathy to the institution itself did not arise among the magisterial reformers until Beza's ascendancy. For Martyr, this lay beyond the grave.¹³³ Like his Reformed contemporaries, he recognised that ecclesiastical organisation derived from Christ's headship and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Its outlines were therefore to be discerned in Scripture. Yet the diversity of the gifts and the circumstances of individual cities and territories precluded an over-prescriptive approach to its detail.

Related aspects of Martyr's thought demonstrate its similarity with the emerging Reformed tradition, as represented by Bucer and Calvin, and marked by an emphasis on the plurality of ministries from other Reformation currents. From as early as 1527 Bucer and his successors developed a doctrine of plural ministries within the church.¹³⁴ As Martyr would do, they distinguished between permanent and temporary offices in Ephesians 4.11, and in a decisive break with tradition determined that ministry embraced not only the teaching and sacramental functions of pastors and teachers, but also the lay ministry of elders and deacons.¹³⁵ This followed Bucer's 1536 juxtaposition of the Romans and Corinthians verses, identifying the office of elder, and Calvin's subsequent employment of I Timothy 5.17, to articulate clearly the idea of a twofold eldership. We have noted how Martyr also makes this connection, even though in his description of the individual offices he is noticeably less concerned than others to enumerate and label a distinct hierarchy of functions. Like both Bucer and Calvin, Martyr supports his arguments for the collegial character of ministry with examples drawn from classical antiquity, especially the Roman republic. The description of the

¹³³ Patrick Collinson, 'Episcopacy and Reform in England in the Later Sixteenth Century', in *SCH* 3, ed. G.J. Cuming (Leiden : Brill, 1966), 97.

¹³⁴ Elsie A. McKee, *Elders and the Plural Ministry: The Role of Exegetical History in Illuminating John Calvin's Theology* (Geneva: Droz, 1988), 133-51, 171-4.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 154-8, 190.

eldership as a senate, for example, is common in Calvin.¹³⁶ Martyr's patristic citations are also similar: like Calvin and Bucer, he appeals to Ambrose on I Timothy 5 to establish the role of the non-teaching elder.¹³⁷

Although Martyr's thought, like Bucer's, remained fluid over the number of offices, never attaining Calvin's precise and generally consistent enumeration of the fourfold offices of pastor, doctor, elder and deacon, it clearly belongs to this stream of interpretation. It is sharply distinguished from Luther's approach, with his reluctance to address questions of ecclesiastical government, and conviction that the search for a divinely sanctioned church polity was mistaken.¹³⁸ Yet it also differs from the tradition most visibly represented by Zürich, with its attachment to the view that the 'rulers' of Romans 12.8, for example, were to be identified with the civil powers. For Martyr, as we have seen, eldership is a church ministry, although as in Bucer it is a broad category, sometimes referring to lay elders but sometimes descriptive of all who exercise a prophetic rather than a diaconal ministry.

In his preference for a restored form of episcopal government, Martyr shares the pragmatic, flexible approach of many reformers of his generation. Luther had turned to the Elector as a *Notbischof* but despite mentioning the 'legitimate episcopal office' in the preface to the *Saxon Instructions* showed little interest in the revival of the office itself.¹³⁹ Bucer's *De Regno Christi*, rather surprisingly in view of its author's continental church orders, places the bishop at the centre of the government and renewal of the church. Though he is no more than a senior presbyter, governing the church with the assistance of a council of suitable presbyteral colleagues, in Bucer's view such permanent and regular supervision is necessary in England, for whose circumstances the work was written. Here the bishop is responsible for sending out ministers in his diocese, and governs their conduct by means of visitation and regular synods. He is described as the consul to the presbyteral senate.¹⁴⁰ The *De Regno Christi*, written in Bucer's maturity, is in this respect a salutary testimony to the flexibility of reformers of this generation on questions of church order.

¹³⁶ Eg, CR 29: 566-7, 30: 782; *Inst.*, IV.3.8. McKee (1988), 25, n32, notes that Calvin uses this word fifteen times in the *Institutes*.

¹³⁷ McKee (1988), 29, 99; *Cor*, 62^v, 182^v; Ambrose/Iaster, *Commentarii in epistolam ad Timotheum primam*, 5, PL 17: 475-6.

¹³⁸ Jaynes, 10-11. See also Gert Haendler, *Luther on Ministerial Office and Congregational Function* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 27-44.

¹³⁹ Cargill Thompson (1984), 147-9; Jaynes, 58.

¹⁴⁰ Bucer, *De Regno Christi*, in *Melanchthon and Bucer*, ed. W. Pauck, LCC 19 (1969), 277-94.

Calvin also allows for episcopacy. In the *Institutes*, Calvin like Bucer observes that 'bishop' is used interchangeably in the New Testament with 'presbyter', 'pastor' and 'minister' to describe the minister of the word.¹⁴¹ He is careful to distinguish the supervisory office of bishops from biblical descriptions of ministry. The former stems not from the New Testament but from the human decision of the early church, to meet the need to avoid dissension and to be a consul in the senate of presbyters. He guarantees its order, carries out its decisions and presides by counselling, warning and exhorting.¹⁴² Moreover, when Calvin turns to discuss church councils, he allows that doctrinal disputes should be resolved at synods of 'true bishops'.¹⁴³

Martyr's thought on episcopacy is less cautious than either Bucer's or Calvin's. He suggests that the office is part of the New Testament's provision for the church's government, though he clearly contemplates a range of possibilities for its exercise. Nevertheless, he envisages a greater degree of continuity between the apostolic office and the episcopal than either Bucer or Calvin allows. Episcopal authority in Martyr is less dependent on presbyteral collegiality: the bishop's office itself has inherent authority. Moreover, while he describes the election of bishops by the presbyters, and sees them as one order, he does not regard them as a dispensable feature of the church's government, a position to which attachment to the aristocratic principle predisposes him.

The most distinctive aspect of Martyr's approach to church government, however, is his commitment to the democratic element. Despite their sympathies, most other reformers drew back from significant lay involvement in practice. When, in the year of Martyr's death, Jean Morély proposed a genuinely congregational exercise of church discipline, he attracted the bitter opposition of the Reformed churches of France as well as Geneva's resistance.¹⁴⁴ The roots of this caution lay much earlier. Though Bucer, for example, had originally affirmed the ability of each believer to exercise judgment in the church, holding to the position that the keys were the possession of every believer, after the mid-1530s he did not encourage the exercise of such congregational power, especially over church discipline. The exercise of the keys, he came to argue, belonged to the

¹⁴¹ CR 29: 566-7; *Inst*, IV.3.8.

¹⁴² CR 29: 572-3; *Inst*, IV.4.1-2.

¹⁴³ CR 29: 646; *Inst*, IV.9.13.

¹⁴⁴ Morély's treatise was the *Traicté de la discipline et police chrestienne* (Lyon: de Tournes, 1562). Cf Kingdon (1967), esp 46-64; and P. Denis and J. Rott, *Jean Morély (ca 1524-ca 1594) et l'Utopie d'une Démocratie Dans L'Eglise* (Geneva: Droz, 1993).

church's office-bearers.¹⁴⁵

Though in principle he retained a commitment to congregational involvement in the exercise of discipline and choice of ministers, Calvin shared this reticence. The 1543 *Institutes* describe a twofold ministry of the keys: word and sacrament, and discipline. The former is in the hands of the church's pastors and doctors, the latter the responsibility of the elders.¹⁴⁶ Congregational participation is cautiously envisaged. He allows the involvement of the whole church in the election of ministers, commending a process in which ministers and elders play the leading role. It is, he suggests, sufficient for the people to consent and approve to the candidate set before them.¹⁴⁷ Over discipline, elders are to exercise excommunication with the church's knowledge and approval. The people do not decide the issue, but act rather as a 'witness and guardian' to prevent partiality.¹⁴⁸ By 1559, presbyteral control has been strengthened: the 'church' as a disciplinary body in Matthew 18 is identified not with the congregation but with the Sanhedrin. Reformed thought was therefore increasingly locating the exercise of ecclesiastical authority with the elders and pastors, not the congregation.¹⁴⁹ In practice, both discipline and the election of office-holders in the Genevan church was effectively controlled by the pastors and elders, acting with the concurrence of the Small Council.

Martyr's consistency in contending for significant congregational involvement in church government was thus increasingly unusual in his day. Yet, as we have seen, his attachment to a mixed form of church government is a constant in his published works. Heralded in the 1544 exposition of the creed, he continues to hold to this concept in the lectures on Samuel which date from his time in Zürich: the voice of the people is not to be excluded from church's counsels. In Zürich, no more than Strasbourg or England, he could not have observed this principle in practice, and the theologians with whom he had most sympathy displayed a progressive detachment from the idea. He was not deterred. The correlation of the Aristotelian model with what he observed in Scripture, not least in the Old Testament, was conclusive. If the dilemmas of pastoral work, above all the obstacles the reformers faced in implementing a working church discipline, did not have the same influence over his thought as they did over his peers, the consequence is not altogether regrettable. Like every interpreter, his context shaped the

¹⁴⁵ van t' Spijker (1996), 81, 84, 132, 176.

¹⁴⁶ CR 29: 647-8, 650-1; *Inst*, IV.11.1, 6.

¹⁴⁷ CR 29: 570-1; *Inst*, IV.3.15.

¹⁴⁸ CR 29: 662; *Inst*, IV.12.7.

¹⁴⁹ CR 29: 638; *Inst*, IV.8.15; McKee (1988), 34.

questions he seeks to answer. Martyr's freedom from the immediate pressure of pastoral necessity enabled him to maintain a position on church government which was alternative in significant respects to the emerging Genevan orthodoxy. The wide acceptance of his works in the later sixteenth century suggests that his vision of order was not an unwelcome one.

Chapter Four

Christian Discipline

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Matthew 18.15-18

When you are assembled, and my spirit is present, with the power of the Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus

I Corinthians 5.4b-5

Introduction

The setting of Martyr's thought

There is an irony in Martyr's persistent advocacy of discipline as the third mark of the church. For it never fell to him to exercise pastoral office north of the Alps. After Lucca he was rarely more than an observer of the diversity of approaches to Christian discipline attempted in his era. His ministry in northern Europe, nevertheless, was exercised in a milieu where it was a pressing issue. In Strasbourg he forged a close partnership with the most restless advocate of disciplinary reform, Martin Bucer, in a town where the struggle to achieve a satisfactory compromise between church and magistrate was both protracted and inconclusive. In England, his involvement with the construction of a reformed church coincided with rising alarm over the lack of church discipline. Returning to the continent in 1553, his opinion on the matter was to be sought by both exiled Englishmen and reforming Poles. Finally, repeatedly declining invitations to move to Geneva, where Calvin was finally achieving consistorial

autonomy, he spent six years as Bullinger's colleague in Zürich, a city whose long-established disciplinary practice differed significantly from his own views.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first begins with an examination of the medieval background and proceeds to review the various approaches adopted by the new churches up to the middle of the sixteenth century. This survey, though lengthy, is a necessary prelude to an exploration of Martyr's own thought, which is identified with no established position. As with other aspects of his theology, his approach situates him within the emerging Reformed tradition without aligning him unambiguously with any single contemporary.

Medieval inheritance

The reformers' concern for a functioning Christian discipline had its origins in their repudiation of sacramental penance and the disciplinary structures of the late medieval church. This was more or less common ground. However, diverging assumptions about the scope and nature of biblical discipline, coupled with a diversity of political contexts, generated a proliferation of solutions. Few endured for long. Martyr's day was one of frequent change, as the evolving views of the reformers both shaped, and responded to, political conditions across Europe.

The medieval inheritance had achieved its settled form by the early thirteenth century. Innocent III's 1215 bull *Omnis utriusque sexus*, requiring universal annual private confession to a priest, crystallised and regulated a penitential system which had evolved over several centuries. Its origins lay in early church practice, based on the provisions of Matthew 18.15-18. From the second century until the seventh, serious open sin was a concern of the whole church. It was strictly dealt with by a public process. Excommunicates were excluded from all benefits of church membership, and shunned by the faithful. Reconciliation involved periods of penance, during which they were treated like catechumens. The damage done by sin to the community was repaired by penitential acts. The severity of the process was exemplified by the fact that such restoration was permitted to a sinner only once in a lifetime. Further, as the Roman empire adopted Christianity, excommunication came to attract civil disabilities and

was increasingly governed by conciliar canons.¹

By the early middle ages, disciplinary practice had altered. The lifelong consequences of penance came to deter recourse to public discipline. Open penitence was limited to the most notorious sins, and was increasingly exacted through secular or ecclesiastical courts, rather than in the context of congregational life. Indeed, under the Carolingians, excommunication became a criminal sanction over which the church gradually lost control. When ecclesiastical authority over the instrument was reasserted by the papacy in the eleventh and twelfth century, assisted by the decretists' elaboration of canon law, it became in the main an instrument administered by the church courts, detached from a congregational, penitential forum.

This transformation of public discipline was accompanied by the rise of the alternative system of private penance, derived from Celtic monastic practice. From the seventh century, auricular confession to a priest, who administered penance in accordance with a tariff, began to supplant the public rites. Significantly, penance came to be performed after the sinner was reconciled by priestly absolution. Further, the process was repeatable, and no permanent disabilities were incurred. During the twelfth century, further development occurred. The practice was recognised as a sacrament, while the penitential exercises became lighter and more arbitrary, and were increasingly subordinate to contrition as the principal part of forgiveness of sins.²

Omnis utriusque sexus confirmed this separation of private penance and ecclesiastical discipline. With papal authority endorsing the belief that private confession was a divine command, it now emerged as a comprehensive remedy. Moral conduct was now supervised through this sacrament, administered by the priest in association with auricular confession. The privacy of the confessional relationship enabled the church to examine the whole of the penitent's conduct, and not merely the greater, public sins addressed by the early church's public process. Priestly authority, exercised in close enquiry into the penitent's life, was accordingly significantly enhanced. To assist

¹ On the evolution of discipline in the medieval period, see T.N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977); on excommunication in particular, Elisabeth Vodola, *Excommunication in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); there is also a helpful summary of pre-Reformation practice in Amy N. Burnett, *The Yoke of Christ: Martin Bucer and Christian Discipline* (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1994), 9-18. Evans (1992), 147-51 has a useful discussion of the medieval background.

² Vodola (1986), 8-13, 20-7; Burnett (1994), 11; Tentler (1977), 9-18.

confessors, a genre of manuals, *summae de casibus poenitentiae*, was developed, detailing questions which would elicit the complete disclosure of sin.³

In the thirteenth century this evolution of pastoral practice was accompanied by an elaboration of the theology of penance. This distinguished three penitential acts: contrition, confession itself, and the performance of penance. The latter, now seen as providing satisfaction for the temporal penalty due to sin, followed priestly pronouncement of forgiveness. Moreover, though Aquinas had held that it was the acts of the penitent which comprised the sacrament, in the Scotist tradition, absolution itself came to be seen as its essence.⁴

This penitential forum retained excommunication only in its 'minor' form: exclusion from the Eucharist and other sacraments, without social consequences or community involvement. *Excommunicatio maior*, on the other hand, belonged to the ecclesiastical courts and now had a relatively remote connection with moral failure. Its connection with the supervision of morals was in practice remote, though some transgressions were held to incur the sanction automatically (*excommunicatio latae sententiae*). The decretists held that excommunication was normally appropriate only in the event of contumacy, and it became primarily a sanction for the enforcement of judicial process. Further, the link with salvation was also obscured. Under Innocent IV, the Council of Lyons decreed that excommunication did not jeopardise salvation for those who submitted to their sentence, completing the separation between the church's penitential and juridical dispensations. Nevertheless, the scope of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction meant that excommunication was never in danger of falling into disuse: debt cases, for example, were among the commonest suits in which it was deployed. Further, its frequent use by the church's *forum iudiciale* saw its consequences precisely spelt out and enforced: interpreted as the deprivation of the privileges of church membership, it entailed widespread social and legal disabilities. If its spiritual consequences were attenuated, it remained a formidable instrument of ecclesiastical power.⁵

However, evidence that late medieval Europe accordingly laboured under a monolithic penitential system, in which the laity were held captive by guilt, is not easy to

³ T.N. Tentler, 'The Summa for Confessors as an Instrument of Social Control,' in *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, eds. C. Trinkaus and H.A. Oberman, *Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought* 10 (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 103-16; Tentler (1977), 20-7.

⁴ Burnett (1994), 11-12.

⁵ Vodola (1986), 36-45, 82-6; Burnett (1994), 12-13; Tentler (1977), 302-04.

accumulate. Genuine examples of moral despair induced by the system, not least in Luther himself, can be found. However, Martyr was not alone among the reformers in complaining that the Roman church's supervision of morals was too light rather than overweening: 'as regards daily living, they have relaxed the bridle of discipline'.⁶ His comment finds many echoes in the early sixteenth century, not least among reform-minded circles within the 'old church'. The jurisdictional disorder of the late medieval church militated against consistency or comprehensiveness in the enforcement of penitential canons. Few attended confession more often than the annual minimum, and ecclesiastical legislation tended to enjoin moderation on confessors.⁷

Nevertheless, the obligation of confession gave the church the opportunity to instruct, supervise and inculcate morality among the laity, and was potentially a potent means of social control. Many reformers enthusiastically welcomed its end. Luther saw mandatory auricular confession as the means by which the laity had been subjected to priestly tyranny. Its inquisitorial dimension was criticised as scripturally unjustifiable and in practice oppressive. When *Exsurge Domine* and books of canon law were cast on the bonfire in Wittenberg on 10 December 1520, a further work selected for destruction was the widely used *Summa Angelica*, symbolic emblem of sacramental penance.⁸ Further, if some reformers were ready to retain the confessional as a pastorally useful instrument, none regarded it as necessary. The confession of 'hidden' sin to God did not require priestly mediation but was accomplished both privately and through the general, public confession of the church.

The low repute of penance in the sixteenth century was accompanied by rumbling impatience with the discipline exercised by the church courts, not least over excommunication. From the fourteenth century, there was evidence of growing lay apathy towards its exercise. Secular reluctance to coerce contumacious excommunicates, mendicant outreach to the supposedly excluded, and papal grants of princely immunities all undermined the authority of the courts, coinciding with a growing resentment to the scope of their jurisdiction.⁹ Such dissatisfaction was reflected in the agendas for the Council of Constance, which lamented the decay of the

⁶ *Mel*, 103^r; *PML* 1: 175.

⁷ L.G. Duggan, 'Fear and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation', *ARG* 75 (1984), 153-72.

⁸ Tentler (1974), 103.

⁹ Vodola (1986), 140. For an example of communal impatience with ecclesiastical jurisdiction, see Bruce Gordon, *Clerical Discipline and the Rural Reformation: The Synod in Zürich 1532-1580* (Bern: Lang, 1992), 34-36.

reputation and effectiveness of ecclesiastical discipline.¹⁰

However, the collapse of the conciliar movement ended the prospect of radical change. Although hierarchical complacency did not go unchallenged, few questioned the legitimacy of penitential theory. Reform proposals in the early sixteenth century, notably those set before the fifth Lateran Council and the 1537 *Consilium de emendanda ecclesia catholica*, identified organisational complexity and the proliferation of exemptions and dispensations from the ordinary jurisdiction of bishops as detrimental to the church's ministry. The elimination of anomalies and exemptions would suffice to restore its prestige. Theological change was not considered necessary.¹¹

As the Protestant Reformation began, therefore, the disciplinary systems of the late medieval church were functioning but unstable. Dissatisfaction with the contradictions and injustices of the system was more prevalent than theological dissent. But the system was vulnerable. Luther's protest against the abuse of indulgences soon evolved into a powerful critique of the theology underlying both sacramental penance and the authority of canon law. It found a ready audience. The weakened pillars of the late medieval edifice of discipline, the confessional and the church courts, were undermined and readily collapsed. Martyr's prescriptions for discipline were developed in the aftermath of this demolition, when the quest for structures that would maintain the church's purity was pursued in a landscape where political interests and evangelical concerns were in negotiation, united in rejection of the old order and warily seeking a new one.

New impulses to the reform of discipline

The theology which repudiated sacramental penance and canon law necessitated a new approach to discipline. Justification by faith, in particular, exposed the traditional penitential system as confusing and redundant. Auricular confession was not a

¹⁰ Vodola (1986), 142; Gordon (1992), 26; J.M. Estes, *Christian Magistrate and State Church: The reforming career of Johannes Brenz* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 82. For details of the protracted tussle between common lawyers and civilians over the competence of church courts in early Tudor England, which saw the ecclesiastical courts losing ground over disputed areas, see R.H. Helmholz, *Roman Canon Law in Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 23-6, 30-3.

¹¹ H. Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1957 [Freiburg: Herder, 1949]), I, 117-30, 423-6.

divinely-instituted sacrament, nor was priestly absolution necessary to a forgiveness of sins now secured by faith in the promises of the gospel. True *poenitentia* was the repentance of heart which throws the believer on the mercy of God. It led to good works, but since Christ had made a full satisfaction for sin, these were now to be performed in service of God and neighbour, not as a temporal penalty.

The notion that the power of the keys belonged to the priest in absolution was also rejected. Rather, reformers related Matthew 18.18's power of binding and loosing to the proclamation of the gospel. It was primarily Christ's work, performed as his word is heard, and hence pertained not to the clergy alone but to the whole church. Luther accordingly taught, in 1521, that the power belonged to the whole congregation or to the pastor as its representative.¹² In 1530 he was to hold that the keys are an office given to all Christendom for the binding or remitting of sins, exercised by the preaching of the law and gospel. Canon law's confidence that the power of the keys justified the judicial exercise of excommunication was misplaced.¹³

Obedience to the dominical commands of Matthew 18.15-18 remained the starting point for the reformers. However, the replacement of the historic inheritance was not straightforward. The repudiation of canon law as binding over the conscience precluded solutions based on judicial coercion. Rather, discipline was now seen as an aspect of pastoral care. The church's only sword was the word of God. Since the freedom of the Christian was to be exercised in service of others, this included the work of helping one another in obedience to Christ, and embraced correction alongside instruction and encouragement. This recovery of the restorative purpose of church discipline distinguished the reformers' approach from the penal emphasis which tended to characterise traditional practice and its apologists.¹⁴ But attempts to realise the ideal produced a plethora of approaches. They were also to place many reformers in tension with the civil power.¹⁵ The pervasive influence of humanism, among ruling elites as well as most of the reformers themselves, had already directed attention to the reform and supervision of morals. Many secular rulers were beginning to assume

¹² WA 8: 159-60.

¹³ WA 30.2: 492-507; LW 40: 359-77.

¹⁴ Evans (1992), 163.

¹⁵ For a useful discussion on the distinctions to be observed between Reformation church discipline and the priorities of the early modern state, see H. Schilling, "'History of Crime' or 'History of Sin'? - Some Reflections on the Social History of Early Modern Church Discipline', in *Politics and Society in Reformation Europe: Essays for Sir Geoffrey Elton on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, eds. E.I. Kouri & T. Scott (London: Macmillan, 1987), 289-310.

responsibility for the spiritual and material welfare of their subjects.¹⁶ Such common ground impelled church partnership with the magistrate, but their interests rarely proved identical. Almost everywhere, the implementation of church discipline was to involve compromise.

The movement for disciplinary reform made most progress in Protestant city states. The urban inheritance was significant here, since the communal character of the late medieval town had acquired a strong religious dimension. Moreover, civic ambitions to control the church were already widespread. Conflict with the hierarchy, over clerical privileges and the scope of ecclesiastical jurisdiction was common, while aspirations to urban legal sovereignty entailed the rejection of external authority, including that of the church. Already in the fifteenth century, some Swiss cities had established morals and marriage courts, supplanting episcopal jurisdiction.¹⁷ The reformers' rejection of the divine authority of canon law and papal jurisdiction partially aligned them with such developments. Those such as Zwingli and Bucer who envisaged church and state sharing responsibility for spiritual affairs, and sympathised with republican forms of government, were ready to harness the communal ethos to the Reformation project, including its disciplinary dimension. The following sections therefore review the interplay of theological conviction and political reality in Martyr's day, as a preliminary to the description of his thought.

Luther and German disciplinary reform

Luther's notion of Christian liberty made him reluctant to prescribe a form of discipline. Obedience is freely given. Like faith, it cannot be coerced. Ecclesiastical compulsion is inconsistent with the gospel. It is for the magistrate to bear the sword. This reticence shaped the direction taken by the churches which looked to him for their church order.

¹⁶ B. Moeller, *Imperial Cities and the Reformation*, ed. H.D.E. Midelfort & M.U. Edwards (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), 36-8.

¹⁷ Moeller, 41-53, outlines the nature of the late-medieval city. On Swiss developments, see T.M. Safley, 'Canon Law and Swiss Reform: Legal Theory and Practice in the Marital Courts of Zürich, Bern, Basel and St Gall', in *Canon Law in Protestant Lands*, ed. R.H. Helmholz (Berlin: Duncker & Humbolt, 1992), 187-201; also Gordon (1992), 34-6; and, P. Blickle, *The Communal Reformation* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1992), 153-204. On civic republicanism and the differences between urban and rural communalism, Heinz Schilling, *Religion, Political Culture and the Emergence of Early Modern Society: Essays in German and Dutch History* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 3-59, 189-201. On communalism in northern Germany, Schilling, 'The Reformation in the Hanseatic Cities', *SCJ* 14 (1983), 443-56.

Luther's discipline was primarily eucharistic. His 1520 *Sermon on the Ban* stressed the corrective nature of withholding of the sacrament as the real power of excommunication. Together with the 'greater ban', including the denial of Christian burial and social ostracism, it stems from Matthew 18.15-18. It follows, recognises and aims to reverse the antecedent forfeiting of *communio* with God effected by sin. It is properly used against public sinful conduct and opponents of the gospel. Though it is punitive, its primary function is as a sign or warning. Since its purpose is the correction and improvement of the sinner, it is a wholesome instrument.¹⁸ A related means of moral discipline was pre-communion examination. In Luther's 1523 *Order of Mass* the pastor has responsibility for interviewing prospective communicants, and for excluding from the sacrament those who lack understanding of the faith or the sacrament or whose lives deny their profession.¹⁹

In later writings, Luther was to exclude *excommunicatio maior*, now seen as a civil penalty, from the purview of the church. The smaller ban is endorsed as truly Christian, excluding the impenitent from the sacrament and the fellowship of the church.²⁰ Yet he was reluctant to prescribe a comprehensive system of church discipline. The transformation of society by the gospel, rather, was to be accomplished by the word of God: the church's task is fundamentally an educational one.²¹ His principal response to the doctrinal and moral wastelands revealed by the visitation of Electoral Saxony in late 1528, for example, was to provide better instruction, through two catechisms. This approach did envisage sanctions against the unrepentant. Recalcitrance towards receiving instruction provided the minister with reason to exclude an individual from the sacraments and other benefits of church membership. Offenders were to be shunned by parents and employers and risked banishment. While coercion of belief was ruled out, as was any compulsion to come to communion, conformity to the moral norms of the community was now expected.²² Nevertheless, it was primarily in their pedagogical programmes that the hopes of Luther and his

¹⁸ WA 6: 63-75; LW 39: 3-22.

¹⁹ Luther, *An Order of Mass or Communion* (1523), WA 12: 205-20; LW 53:15-40; Burnett (1994), 18-21.

²⁰ Luther, *The Smalcald Articles* (1537), WA 50: 160-254.

²¹ On the growing emphasis on schooling and catechetical instruction in the Lutheran Reformation, the educational assumptions of Luther and his followers, and their urging of civic and princely responsibility for this programme, particularly in view of the failure of parents to discharge their pedagogical duties, see Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1978), 4-13, 33-43.

²² Strauss (1978), 157-61; Luther, *The Small Catechism* (1529), WA, 30.1: 239-425.

followers rested. Until at least the 1550s, their approach to discipline itself was tentative and restrained.

Philip Melanchthon's provisions in the Saxon *Unterricht* came to be characteristic of many Lutheran church orders. Three components of discipline were commended, which later became characteristic: confession, the ban, and the superintendent. Melanchthon upheld the role of private confession in pre-communion examination, as a vehicle of pastoral instruction and consolation, and reiterated this in the 1530 *Augsburg Confession*. Here, the ban was dealt with briefly. It is retained in the case of manifest sin, without specifying the means of its exercise. The superintendent's role is limited to overseeing the clergy in the performance of their office, referring serious default to local officials or the Elector.²³

Lutheran church orders commonly followed this approach. Princely concerns for social control played little part. The orders look to schooling as the principal means to secure right doctrine and conduct, often incorporate detailed *Schulordnungen*, and deal with confession and the ban briefly, as an aspect of pastoral care. Occasionally, civil authorities were called upon to be the disciplinary arm of the church, as in the 1525 Leisnig order. But though some orders expected the civil arm to take parallel action, it was normally the clergy, sometimes acting with congregational consent, who bore responsibility for reproving and if necessary punishing unrepentant sinners.²⁴

In Bugenhagen's orders, some development is discernible. Private confession was normally retained. Pastors were expected to exclude public sinners from communion, and Bugenhagen maintained a clear distinction between the ban practised by temporal rulers and that imposed by the church. No temporal disabilities were imposed by the church. However, the disciplinary role of superintendents was elaborated. They were now to oversee the pastors in this aspect of their office.²⁵ Nevertheless, before the mid-sixteenth century, few orders envisaged much more than the exercise of discipline, including the lesser ban, by the local pastor. In few cases was the close involvement of the civil power envisaged. Attempts to introduce a consistorial system involving both secular and church officials in overseeing discipline, such as that envisaged in Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel in the 1540s, rarely materialised.²⁶

²³ Jaynes, 229-31.

²⁴ Strauss (1978), 13-24, 40; Jaynes, 222-31, 256.

²⁵ Jaynes, 231-6.

²⁶ Jaynes, 237-8, 251-4.

Further south a different approach was attempted, mainly under the influence of Johannes Brenz. Strongly influenced by Erasmus in his view of the relationship of church and state, when invited to consult on a new order for Württemberg in the 1530s, Brenz surprisingly proposed ducal control of ecclesiastical discipline. Annual visitation by a commission of theologians and gentry was the centrepiece of his scheme. Possessing extensive powers to appoint superintendents over the pastors in each prefecture, the visitors were to supervise public morality through ducal officials.²⁷ In the early 1550s, Brenz further developed this model: the Württemberg *Visitationsrat*, or consistory, comprising both political councillors and theologians, became the central organ of church government. Discipline was exercised almost entirely through church superintendents, conducting visitations and reporting to general superintendents who in turn consulted with consistory officials. Minor excommunication by pastor alone survived in attenuated form, as a warning not to partake of the sacrament. Recalcitrant sinners were reported to the superintendent for further admonition, conducted with two local judges. Formal excommunication, which entailed spiritual and social but not legal privations, fell to the twice-yearly meeting of the general superintendents with the consistory and was lifted by the consistory with ducal consent. For Brenz, this was theologically necessary: 'tell it to the church' justified the reservation of this power to civil ecclesiastical government. The interests of order meant that the benefits of discipline could be enjoyed only through its exercise by the magistrate acting as member and governor of the church.²⁸

Described by Estes as Brenz's 'great contribution to the institutionalisation of the Reformation', this system was nonetheless atypical of Lutheran practice. More commonly, pastoral concerns remained uppermost, ensuring discipline remained a ministerial function. The focus fell on the pre-communion examination of the faithful, with the small ban retained as a sanction. The acquiescence of the civil authorities in these arrangements was normally the limit of their involvement. Indeed, where there was an impulse for visitations and the office of superintendent, it normally came from the reformers themselves. The territorial consistorial system largely lay in the future. Though most of these reformers, with the exception of Luther himself, welcomed the partnership of the magistrate, in few places was this a reality.

²⁷ Estes (1992), 49-72; *idem* (1982), *passim*.

²⁸ Estes (1982), 72-7, 95-101.

Swiss disciplinary practice - the norm

A distinctive mark of the Swiss Reformation was its early attention to discipline. The communal traditions of the Swiss cities and the humanist backgrounds of their reformers gave both a strong interest in the supervision of moral conduct. Further, the prevailing conception of the relationship of church and state, effectively identifying the local church with the civil community, rendered Luther's distinction between church discipline and magisterial sword obscure.

Zürich pioneered the approach which was to characterise early Swiss practice.²⁹ Zwingli's theology endorsed the city's conception of itself as a *corpus Christianum*. Though the church local, as the authentic gathering of believers, has the power to exercise discipline, he identified it with the civil community; though a mixed body, it is rightly termed 'church' on account of its agreed confession. Hence the moral standards of church and city are the same. The civil magistrate accordingly corresponds to the New Testament elder, and bears the primary responsibility for discipline.³⁰

Zwingli's expectations of the scope of moral discipline were high. In the First Zürich Disputation of 1523, he contended for a system radically different from traditional penitential practice. An offence against an individual is also committed against the church. Only the ecclesial community in which an offender lives, acting with its minister, has the authority to excommunicate. The minister takes the initiative in seeking repentance. Private admonition is succeeded by warning in the presence of witnesses and then by the whole congregation, which if necessary proceeds to excommunication. The purpose of this discipline is twofold: it preserves the church

²⁹Treatments of Swiss developments include: J.T McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 77-9; J. Wayne Baker, 'Calvin's Discipline and the Early Reformed Tradition: Bullinger & Calvin', in *Calviniana: Ideas and Influence of Jean Calvin*, ed. R.V. Schnucker, Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies 10 (Kirkville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1988), 107-19. On the evolution of the reformed churches' varying approaches to the issue of church discipline: Safley (1992), 187-201; Akira Demura, 'Church Discipline according to Johannes Oecolampadius in the setting of his life and thought' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Princeton, 1964); M.F. Graham, *The Uses of Reform: 'Godly Discipline' and Popular Behaviour in Scotland and Beyond, 1560-1610* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 1-24; Euan Cameron, 'The 'Godly Community' in the Theory and Practice of the European Reformation' in *Voluntary Religion*, eds. W.J. Sheils and Diana Wood, SCH 23 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 131-53.

³⁰ Walton (1972), 497-515.

from corruption and aims to secure the sinner's repentance and restoration. Excommunication itself is appropriate only for public sins, and in more grave cases would extend to a degree of social separation. However, the authority of the community to exercise discipline was properly exercised by its representatives. For its implementation Zwingli therefore looked to the civil power.³¹

The subsequent establishment of the Zürich marriage court (*Ehegericht*) accordingly made moral discipline a civil responsibility. This tribunal acquired responsibility for a wide range of moral offences. Baker summarises: 'Church discipline in Zürich was civil discipline, under the authority of the Christian magistracy, from the beginning of the Reformation'.³²

Under Bullinger, this emphasis was supported by covenantal theology. Sixteenth-century Zürich was analogous to Old Testament Israel. Its council stood in the same relation to its church as had Israel's leaders to the people, and was responsible for enforcing the covenant condition of piety. Moreover, the primary aim of discipline is not the creation of a pure church. Rather, the discipline of morals is an aspect of the magistrate's responsibility to promote good and punish evil, and hence maintain both order and conformity to the conditions of the covenant.³³ This is a separate office from the power of the keys, which is exercised solely in the prophetic office of the minister.³⁴

Bullinger therefore handles excommunication somewhat differently from Zwingli. Accepting the process set out in Matthew 18.15-18, and teaching that the initial steps were informal, he nevertheless held that the supervision of the process was magisterial. Discipline is explicitly not sacramental. The ultimate penalty is a social exclusion imposed by the civil power, through criminal prosecution and physical punishment. The church, argued Bullinger, has no power to exclude from the sacraments. Their purpose is to console: the Lord's Supper is not the occasion for cleansing the church.³⁵

Civic responsibility for moral discipline quickly came to prevail in most Swiss Reformed

³¹ Stephens (1986), 269-74.

³² Baker (1988), 107.

³³ Baker (1988), 108-9. For Bullinger's doctrine of the covenant, see J. Wayne Baker, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant: The Other Reformed Tradition* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1980), 55-140.

³⁴ Baker (1980), 90.

³⁵ Baker (1980), 91-2; *idem* (1992), 35-6. On excommunication's exclusion, Pamela Biel, *Doorkeepers at the House of Righteousness: Heinrich Bullinger and the Zürich Clergy 1535-1575* (Bern: Lang, 1991), 129-32.

cities. The first *Helvetic Confession* of 1536, drafted by Bullinger and Myconius, reflected this consensus. Discipline was to be administered by the Christian magistracy.³⁶ The discipline of morals was a question of public order and concerned the restraint of evil rather than eucharistic purity or individual salvation. There was little desire to retain any form of pre-communion confession or the smaller ban.

Thus the Swiss reformers generally agreed that the exercise of discipline was a matter for the magistrate rather than the minister. An alternative was attempted in only one city, and in view of its ultimate significance for the Reformed tradition, this merits separate consideration.

Swiss disciplinary practice - the exception

The city of Basel shared the Swiss communal tradition and from 1521 was effectively autonomous. Following a disputation, it adopted the Reformation in 1529. A leading proponent was the pastor John Oecolampadius. From the mid-1520s, Oecolampadius had been concerned for the purity of the Lord's Supper, and saw excommunication as vital to this. Though his vision of Christian discipline, substantially different from that of Zwingli and Bullinger, won almost no support among other Swiss cities, through its influence on Martin Bucer and John Calvin it was to prove more influential than the Zürich model.³⁷

Basel's Reformation recognised the responsibility of the city's government for the control and supervision of the church and its ministers. Nevertheless, in the 1529 *Reformationsordnung*, which established a civic marriage court or *Ehegericht*, eucharistic discipline was to be maintained by a separate synod of ministers and deacons. After appropriate warnings, those who continued in open sin or contempt of word and sacrament were to be excluded from the Supper. Though both were exercised under the authority of the city council, a distinction was thus made between matrimonial and eucharistic discipline.³⁸

³⁶ Baker (1992), 36-7.

³⁷ The most complete account of Oecolampadius' thought on discipline is Demura (1964). Also useful are: McNeill (1954), 80-4; Olaf Kuhr, 'Calvin and Basel: the Significance of Oecolampadius and the Basel Discipline Ordinance for the Institution of Ecclesiastical Discipline in Geneva,' *SBET* 16 (1998), 19-33; and Baker (1992), 35-48.

³⁸ Demura (1964), 54-74.

Oecolampadius' ideas were most fully expounded in his 1530 *Oratio de reducenda excommunicatione*. Highlighting its pastoral priority, he contended that a functioning discipline is required by Christ. Its purpose is not punitive but restorative: the aim is the repentance of the offender, and his reconciliation with the church. Pronouncing of the sentence of excommunication belongs to the minister of the word, whose authority derives not from the magistrate but directly from God. Excommunication should therefore be exercised by the minister acting with the church. Specifically, he proposed that a board of twelve censors (*Bannherren*) should be responsible for discipline. The board would comprise the ministers of the city's four parishes, and eight lay elders: four senators, and four congregational representatives. These censors would individually and corporately administer discipline over open public sin, culminating in exclusion from the Lord's Supper.³⁹

This proposal introduced two significant innovations. The first was the autonomy of church discipline. The duties and functions of the civil and ecclesiastical powers were distinguished. The exacting of civil penalty was distinct from the performance of ecclesiastical penance. The former was a punishment, the latter a token of genuine repentance, without which readmission to the church was impossible. Within the framework of a mutual commitment to the *corpus christianum*, the church should therefore have autonomy in exercising discipline.⁴⁰

Oecolampadius' second innovation was the proposal for lay censors. Power to discipline lies with neither magistrate or clergy, but with the congregation. Hence the need for a city college of elders to exercise it. Oecolampadius' proposals stem from his doctrine of the keys. Since the apostle Peter is a representative figure, the power of the keys is the possession of believers as a body, and authority to excommunicate is accordingly a congregational one. This requires the involvement of lay elders.⁴¹

Basel's 1530 *Disciplinary Ordinance* modified Oecolampadius's proposals but retained the principles of church autonomy and lay involvement. Each parish, rather than the whole city, would have a board of three censors, including the minister, meeting each Sunday to report and to take counsel for action. Excommunicates unrepentant for more

³⁹ *Ibid*, 76-90.

⁴⁰ Demura (1964), 87-9; McNeill (1954), 83. Oecolampadius would argue this distinction between civil and ecclesiastical discipline at the conference of the Civic League held at Aargau in September 1530. The temporal power, he contended, wields the sword of punishment, the church a medical skill. He did not persuade the delegates; Demura (1964), 99-101.

⁴¹ Demura (1964), 218-20; McNeill (1954), 80.

than a month would attract civil sanctions as well as exclusion from the Lord's Supper and congregational shunning.⁴²

Although he shared the contemporary consensus that the Christian magistrate is responsible for spiritual welfare, Oecolampadius' contribution was therefore distinctive. Endorsing the Swiss understanding of discipline as requiring an active supervision of morals, separate from the pre-communion examination of Lutheran thought, he transferred responsibility for it into the hands of the congregation. Represented by its minister and lay elders, it administered discipline with a pastoral intent. Within the *corpus christianum* framework, the roles of the two jurisdictions were thus clearly distinguished, and a degree of autonomy for the church achieved. This was to be highly significant in the thought of the most industrious reformers of church discipline, Martin Bucer and John Calvin.

Strasbourg: melting pot of reform

In Strasbourg, consensus between minister and magistrate over the exercise of discipline was never achieved. Bucer's ministry was marked by persistent tension over the issue. The volume of his writings, the breadth of his sympathies, and the wide scope of his disciplinary activity all make assessment of his contribution complex. He was involved in schemes of reform in Lutheran, proto-Reformed, and Catholic jurisdictions, and collaborated with leaders as varied as Oecolampadius, Melancthon, and Archbishop Hermann von Wied of Cologne in pursuit of his vision of a church marked by obedience to the New Testament prescription. He thus engaged with most of the approaches to discipline which we have reviewed. Moreover, though imperial politics ultimately frustrated the realisation of his hopes in Strasbourg, on account of his persistence the city became the anvil on which many of the disciplinary issues of the Reformation were hammered out.

Bucer stood in the late medieval and humanist *corpus christianum* tradition, and his distinctive understanding of discipleship exercised a decisive influence over his interpretation of discipline. 'Living for others' characterises the Christian. Discipline is therefore primarily the exercise of mutual care.⁴³ This motif, prominent early in Bucer's

⁴² Demura (1964), 99-101, 118-24; McNeill (1954), 83-4.

⁴³ On this in his 1527 Ephesians commentary, see Hammann (1984), 154.

thought and related to Luther's understanding of evangelical freedom, governed its development. Discipline was primarily a means of Christian formation rather than a corrective instrument. Ultimately this led Bucer in late 1540s to construct the system of *Christlichen Gemeinschaften*, in which believers covenanted together, voluntarily submitting to a form of discipline administered by their parish minister and selected elders. Though he never abandoned his vision of a partnership of church and civil authorities to realise a Christian society in which the church co-operated with the state to restrain evil and promote virtue, a twofold ecclesiology eventually enabled him to contemplate this radical degree of disciplinary autonomy for the church.

The power of the keys was central to Bucer's thought. Initially, he defined them simply as the word of God preached in the power of the Holy Spirit. Traditional connections with priestly absolution were rejected. The biblically legitimate confession of sin had three dimensions. Two of these, namely inward repentance towards God and public, general confession in the church, were necessary for all. Thirdly, believers might also practise confession to one another for mutual comfort. Crucially, it is the faith of the believer, not priestly absolution, which is decisive in determining whether he is loosed from sin. Auricular confession and absolution are therefore unbiblical intrusions into the life of the church. In his 1527 gospels commentary, Bucer argued that the keys belong to the whole gathering of the faithful, including groups of two and three: 'tell it to the church' is not a reference to public excommunication but in principle to all gatherings of the faithful, however small. At this point, Bucer was optimistic that private discipline, by mutual admonition and if necessary shunning, would reform the church. He never abandoned this commitment to 'fraternal admonition' as an aspect of Christian love for neighbour.

Subsequently, a more instrumental view of the exercise of the keys emerged. In the 1530 *Tetrapolitan Confession* it is the clergy who hold the keys, as ministers of Christ. In his 1534 catechism, ministers exercise the keys in preaching, in excommunication and reconciliation, and in imposing penance. The 1537 gospels commentary goes further, identifying the keys with the whole administration of the church. While they belong to the whole church, authority to use them lies with the 'presbyters and bishops'. Indeed, the power to bind and loose was now held to be the most significant part of the minister's authority. It is exercised in gospel preaching and baptism, in congregational teaching and private instruction, and in admonition and excommunication. Finally, in *Von der waren Seelsorge* of 1538, the power of the keys includes discipline and restoration among the five types of pastoral care exercised by the *Seelsorger*, though

Bucer holds that all Christians share responsibility for admonishing sinners.⁴⁴

This evolution found a parallel in an increasing emphasis on the public exercise of discipline. It is likely that Bucer's thought was influenced by his desire to reconcile more moderate Anabaptists to the reformed church, as well as by Oecolampadian ideas.⁴⁵ The *Von der waren Seelsorge* heralded the maturity of his pastoral thought. Here, formal discipline took its place as part of a programme of pastoral care which embraced mandatory catechetical instruction, fraternal admonition, the use of public penitential discipline, and a form of non-sacramental confirmation, envisaged as an opportunity for candidates not only to confess their faith but also to indicate their willingness to be held to account in the church. Penance would be administered to offenders who responded to admonition, and to repentant excommunicates. Discipline is a broad category, understood to embrace admonition, penance and excommunication, and with teaching constitutes the pastoral office. All these elements appeared in Bucer's proposals for the reform of the church in Hesse in 1538 and in the archdiocese of Cologne in 1542-3. In the case of the latter, he also accepted pre-communion examination as a means of instruction and sacramental discipline.⁴⁶

The magistrate's role underwent considerable change in Bucer's thought. The local context compelled some circumspection: the city authorities were wary of their ministers' aspirations.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, Bucer initially assumed that the formal dimension of discipline would be magisterial: in the 1520s one of the reasons why the time was not yet propitious for the public exercise of excommunication was that neither the magistrate nor the majority of citizens were ready for it.⁴⁸ At this point, his understanding of the respective roles of minister and magistrate was closest to Zwingli's. Indeed, he was initially unenthusiastic for Oecolampadius' approach: autonomous church discipline was not desirable and would hinder the magistrate.⁴⁹ However, this opposition was short-lived. In 1531, while working on church orders for

⁴⁴ Burnett (1994), 30-8, 50-61, 72-3, 90-8, 105-6

⁴⁵ David (1982), 43-58; J.D. Derksen, 'Reasons for Dissent Among Strasbourg's Religious Nonconformists, 1536-69', *ARG* 90 (1999), 196.

⁴⁶ Burnett (1994), 113-21, 143-51; Hammann (1984) 256-63.

⁴⁷ On Strasbourg's reluctance, for example, to proceed punitively against confessional dissidents, see Lorna J. Abrey, 'Confession, conscience and honour: the limits of magisterial tolerance in sixteenth-century Strassburg,' in *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation*, eds. O.P. Grell and R. Scribner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 94-107.

⁴⁸ Burnett (1994), 39.

⁴⁹ Demura (1964), 104-5.

Memmingen and Ulm, he embraced Basel's model. In Ulm, he envisaged an eight-strong board of censors - three council members, three community representatives, and the two pastors - exercising discipline, including the ban. By the mid-1530s, though the magistrate was to see that the pastors exercise admonition, private and public, and was also to ensure that excommunication does not disrupt public peace, the exercise of discipline in Bucer's thought rested with the church.⁵⁰ This distinction becomes characteristic: the church is autonomous but operates in partnership with the civil power. Their domains are distinct, though both serve the kingdom of Christ.⁵¹ In *Von der Waren Seelsorge*, the magistrate has responsibility for seeing Christ's kingdom extended among his subjects, but the exercise of ministry, including discipline, is reserved to the church. Magisterial oversight involved ensuring that elders were chosen who would not misuse this authority.⁵²

Bucer's conversion to the Oecolampadian approach also saw him accept lay elders as ministers of discipline. In the Ulm Ordinance he identified these with New Testament presbyters, but Strasbourg's 1531 institution of lay *Kirchenpfleger*, three to each parish, was less satisfactory. The disciplinary role of these wardens was initially insignificant and the council never granted them the autonomy sought by Bucer, rather maintaining them as city officials as well as denying pastors any role in the disciplinary process. In the *Von der Waren Seelsorge*, Bucer indicated the structure he preferred: authority to discipline lies with the elders of the church, and is distinct from the magistrate's sword. The Ziegenhain disciplinary ordinance for Hesse specifically provided for the appointment of elders to share the pastoral care, including admonition and discipline, of the congregation with its ministers.⁵³ In the 1547 Strasbourg *Christlichen Gemeinschaften*, parochial lay elders were chosen to share pastoral oversight with the ministers and *Kirchenpfleger*. The scheme was under magisterial authority, but the exercise of pastoral care, including admonition and sacramental exclusion, was in the hands of what amounted to a presbyteral consistory.⁵⁴ At the heart of Bucer's aspiration for the fellowships was the desire to demonstrate visibly the communal and holy nature of the true church: voluntary submission to the oversight of pastor and elders was the means to this end.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Burnett (1994), 58-65.

⁵¹ Greschat (1994), 23; Hammann (1984), 310-20.

⁵² Burnett (1994), 105-9.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 65-72, 109, 115-19. On Hesse, see also J.C. Stalnaker, 'Anabaptism, Martin Bucer, and the Shaping of the Hessian Protestant Church', *Journal of Modern History* 48 (1976), 601-43.

⁵⁴ Burnett (1994), 185-91.

⁵⁵ Hammann (1994), 134-6.

Bucer's thought accordingly evolved from the Zwinglian model to an autonomous discipline exercised in voluntary church fellowships. His acceptance of a plural pastoral oversight, distinct from the state's own discipline, was a decisive move, while his work is also marked by an increasing concern for catechising and other means of Christian instruction which supplement preaching, reflecting some sympathy for Lutheran concerns, as does his acceptance of the potential of pre-communion examination. The evolution of his thought, should not, however, obscure its substantial continuities. Though he came to realise that in a mixed church, the more zealous could covenant together under a more demanding regime, he never abandoned the ideal of the *corpus christianum*, in which the whole community takes responsibility for Christian discipline: his late *De Regno Christi* testifies to the persistence of this vision of a nation being transformed into Christ's realm. His ecclesiology therefore remained twofold. The *corpus christianum* remained the sphere in which men and women, through the ministry of word, sacrament and discipline, would be brought into the community of the elect. But, in a tension which Luther had also felt, an *ecclesiola* could be the forum for growth and mutual accountability.⁵⁶ Similarly, Bucer's commitment to fraternal admonition as the principal part of discipline was a constant: his emphasis on the Christian life as one of mutual service marked him out from many of the Swiss reformers and situated discipline in this framework, rather as an aspect of civic virtue. It was more important to him to encourage the exercise of fraternal admonition, by believers informally as well as through pastoral oversight, than to prescribe procedures for excommunication. Though he overcame his early reluctance to recommend public excommunication, and saw it as essential for the church, he looked to other instruments - catechising, confirmation, admonition, public penance - to accomplish the main goals of Christian discipline.

Calvin and Geneva: a new orthodoxy

Calvin's construction of the most durable of the disciplinary structures of the Reformation was the counterpart of his particularly clear conception of the instrument. His thinking on the subject crystallised relatively early. Further, its accessibility in the *Institutes* is now complemented by a growing understanding of Genevan practice, through systematic study of the records of the Genevan Consistory.

⁵⁶ Hammann (1984), 162-6. On the concept of the 'inner core' of committed believers, see Cameron (1986), 133-6.

Calvin's early thought was influenced by Oecolampadius. The autonomy he envisaged for church discipline, his conception of its purpose especially in relation to the purity of the Lord's Supper, and the involvement of lay representatives, indicate the appeal of the Basel model.⁵⁷ It was this framework which he developed, relating it to ecclesiology. His thought found its principal expression in the 1541 Ecclesiastical Ordinances and the 1543 edition of the *Institutes*.⁵⁸

Discipline for Calvin functions in the church as a means of sanctification. Christ's work is accomplished on earth through the church's offices.⁵⁹ The exercise of discipline is required if the church is to guide its members to sanctification: toleration of disorder is an affront to Christ, the church's head.⁶⁰ Without a vigorous discipline, the visible church tolerates 'many hypocrites who have nothing of Christ but the name and outward appearance', and whose lives contradict their profession.⁶¹ Hence discipline is part of the pastoral function of educating and caring for church members.

This is related to his understanding of the church's power. For Calvin, the church possesses power in three spheres: doctrine, ecclesiastical laws, and jurisdiction. It is the last which corresponds to power of the keys and relates to the discipline of morals. Thus, Matthew 16 refers generally to the ministry of preaching the word of God, by which men are bound or loosed, while in Matthew 18 the power of the keys is specifically for the exercise of excommunication. The power is ecclesiastical since chastisement's object is not punishment but repentance. Hence it is properly exercised by church rather than magistrate.⁶²

If in discussing the keys Calvin's attention falls on excommunication, when he turns to discipline in general, his conception is broader. Discipline is the connective tissue, the sinews, of the body of the church 'through which the members of the body hold together, each in its own place'. He compares it to a bridle, spur and to a father's rod. It is the means by which doctrine is sustained in the church, so that like a family, society or house, it attains its proper condition. It serves the whole church, making its members teachable and creating in them a new people for God. Though pastors and elders are to be especially watchful, it includes private brotherly admonition by all. If

⁵⁷ Kuhr (1998), 22-30.

⁵⁸ CR 38.1: 15-30, CR 29: 596-8, 658-72.

⁵⁹ Wendel (1950/1965), 292-3.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 298.

⁶¹ CR 29: 542.

⁶² CR 29: 596-8, 647-9.

this is not effective, after two warnings in the presence of witnesses an offender is to be referred to the assembly of the elders for public admonition. Excommunication follows for the obdurate.⁶³

This final sanction has three purposes. First, by excluding the wicked, it preserves the visible purity of the church and avoids disgrace to the name of Christ. Second, it keeps Christians from the corrupting influence of bad examples. The third aim is the repentance of the sinner. Alongside I Corinthians 5.5 on the salvific purpose of exclusion, Calvin cites II Thessalonians 3.14 on the effectual shame arising from its social consequences.⁶⁴ The preservation of the Lord's Supper from indiscriminate administration is particularly important for Calvin: it was the explicit rationale for discipline in his articles for the Geneva Council in 1537, and continued to be a prominent concern.⁶⁵

Although he endorses the necessity of brotherly admonition, Calvin's emphasis falls on the roles of pastors and elders in administering discipline. Informal correction within the congregation plays a minor role. The scope of discipline also attracts his attention. According to Calvin, Matthew 18.15 refers only to 'secret faults' between individuals, though failure to repent of them would lead to public exposure. Open sins, on the other hand, are to be referred immediately to the whole church. This is the plain implication of Matthew 18, finding support in I Timothy 5.20 and Galatians 2.14. Further, sins described as 'crimes or shameful acts', are too serious to be addressed by admonition. As in I Corinthians 5, such offences attract immediate excommunication. Exclusion from the Lord's Supper should continue until the offender provides evidence of his repentance. Secret faults, on the other hand, which come to the church only when the sinner fails to respond to admonition, are not to be punished with excommunication.

Calvin is insistent over the manner in which discipline is exercised. In verbal chastisement, a gentleness appropriate to its proper end is to be combined with a severity corresponding to the gravity of sin. A lengthy period of penance is not necessary for the reconciliation. Public testimony of repentance secures immediate acceptance, since it is evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit. The church should

⁶³ CR 29: 658-9; B.C. Milner, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Church* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 178.

⁶⁴ CR 29: 660-1.

⁶⁵ Alastair Duke, 'Perspectives on European Calvinism', in *Calvinism in Europe, 1540-1620*, eds. A. Pettegree, A. Duke and G. Lewis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 9; Calvin to Somerset, 22 October 1548, CR 41: 64-77; Gorham, 70-1.

recognise it.⁶⁶

On the other hand, Calvin is hesitant to posit a correlation between ecclesiastical sentence and spiritual destiny. Excommunicates are regarded as estranged from the church, but not as spiritually lost. Christ instituted the binding of excommunication to warn of eternal condemnation, not to announce it. The nature of God's mercy precludes despair over the fate of a sinner. Intercession is both appropriate and an obligation. Although excommunicates are to be shunned, Christians are to strive for their return to the society of the church.⁶⁷

The exercise of discipline is the responsibility of the church. He approves of the practice of the ancient church of exercising the power of jurisdiction through the assembly of elders, the *consessum seniorum*. Calvin even describes this as 'Christ's tribunal'. In principle discipline is exercised by this body only with the consent of the whole church. However, the people do not decide the issue but observe 'as witness and guardian so that nothing may be done according to the whim of the few'. Indeed, in Calvin's mature thought, the representative character of the lay officers became less important than their identification with New Testament elders.⁶⁸

Calvin's 1541 return to Geneva was conditional on the implementation of discipline on these lines, including the appointment of a consistory.⁶⁹ Its structure inevitably reflected the accommodation of his ideas to the city's politics. Originally intending a morals court on the Swiss model, the city's government was disinclined to concede the extent of ecclesiastical autonomy for which Calvin contended. Twelve of the Geneva Consistory's lay members were statutorily required to be members of the city councils, and in practice the elected members were normally nominees of the small council.⁷⁰ Obdurate excommunicates could be turned over to the small council for secular punishment after one year. The council also had the power to find the consistory in error.⁷¹ Hence church discipline, if delegated to a semi-autonomous body, retained a strong link to the civil power.

⁶⁶ CR 29: 659-63; Kuhr (1998), 29; Milner (1970), 175-7.

⁶⁷ CR 29: 663-64.

⁶⁸ CR 29: 650-51, 662; Kuhr (1998), 27-28.

⁶⁹ Robert M. Kingdon, 'The Control of Morals in Calvin's Geneva', in *The Social History of the Reformation* eds. L.P. Buck and J.W. Zophy (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1972); repr. in R.M. Kingdon, *Church and Society in Reformation Europe*, (London: Variorum, 1985), 3-16 (6).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 6-7; Duke (1994), 10.

⁷¹ Kingdon (1972/1985), 10-11; *idem* (1967), 39.

This represented a compromise between Calvin's ideal and the oligarchy's desire for a court of morals similar to those of Zürich or Bern.⁷² Over authority to excommunicate, there were repeated tussles between Calvin and his opponents in the city. Not until Calvin won his struggle for power with the Perrinists in the mid-1550s was the Consistory's right to excommunicate and restore fully established. In practice, discipline was exercised with a high degree of ecclesiastical freedom and ministerial direction. Both the operation of the Consistory and the composition of the eldership were determined by the city's pastors. Lay elders were closely involved, but the initiative in discipline normally came from the ministers. Indeed, this presbyteral system was to be challenged by some who came to regard the concentration of authority in the hands of office-holders and the lack of lay, congregational involvement as unbiblical.⁷³

The detailed evidence of the Consistory's work, only recently coming to light, reveals the measure of Calvin's achievement. Ecclesiastical discipline, clearly distinguished from the criminal jurisdiction of the state, was exercised throughout the civil community. The registers reveal both the main directions of the weekly court's work. Its tenor was clearly more pedagogical and pastoral than juridical. It particularly laboured to combat superstition and inculcate orthodox belief by supervising attendance at sermons and catechetical instruction, as well as by examining heterodox individuals for their knowledge of the creed and Lord's Prayer. Evidence for its efforts to encourage the reconciliation of both quarrelling citizens and fractious marriages is plentiful. This pastoral ministry was often linked to preparation for the quarterly communion service. In marital affairs, though the Consistory would act as a court of first instance in divorce proceedings, its records disclose vigorous and successful efforts to effect reconciliation. Moreover, the registers also disclose the high importance Calvin attached in practice to urgent pastoral admonition as a vital part of the Consistory's work. Study of its proceedings is therefore modifying the traditional image of the Consistory as an instrument of repressive control. Its approach was governed by pastoral considerations: consistent with Calvin's thought, the control of morals was

⁷² Duke (1994), 10.

⁷³ Kingdon (1967), 44-59.

subordinate to the restoration of the sinner.⁷⁴

The consistorial system was to become the mark of Reformed churches across Europe.⁷⁵ Calvin had given birth to a durable and versatile instrument. However, in the 1540s, this outcome was by no means inevitable. Not until the 1549 eucharistic concord between Bullinger and Calvin was Geneva accepted within the Swiss connection.⁷⁶ Her star rose higher with Zürich's support for Calvin's position in his confrontation with the Perrinists in 1553-5.⁷⁷ The stabilisation of Calvin's system following this resolution, and the respectability that Bullinger's endorsement bestowed, ultimately facilitated the emergence of Geneva's hegemony in Reformed thought and practice. But in Martyr's day, this largely lay in the future.

Summary

Disciplinary practice among the churches of the Reformation thus displayed great variety. There were marked differences both between and within the emerging Reformed and Lutheran traditions, and some overlap between them. Indeed, to apply such labels to the fluid confessional situation of the era is fraught with potential anachronism. The separation of Protestant Europe into these two families was not the only possible outcome: the mid-century was characterised by evolution and the cross-fertilisation of ideas, as well as misunderstanding. Bucer's flexibility is not the only example of this ferment: before the *Consensus Tigurinus* Calvin himself was regarded by many Swiss as practically Lutheran in his eucharistic doctrine, and the Zürich students in Oxford initially assessed Martyr in the same way. Even in the late 1550s, Calvin could still hope for a rapprochement with moderate Lutherans, led by Melancthon,

⁷⁴ Robert M. Kingdon, 'The Geneva Consistory', in *Calvinism in Europe, 1540-1620*, eds. A. Pettegree, A. Duke and G. Lewis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 21-34; *idem*, 'A New View of Calvin in the Light of the Registers of the Geneva Consistory', in *Calvinus Sincerioris Religionis Vindex*, eds. Wilhelm H. Neuser and Brian G. Armstrong, *Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies* 36 (Kirkville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1997), 21-33; *Registres du Consistoire de Genève au Temps de Calvin*, eds. T.A. Lambert *et al.* (Geneva: Droz, 1996 -), I (1542-44), II (1545-46).

⁷⁵ Duke (1994), 11; see, for example, Raymond A. Mentzer, 'Disciplina nervus ecclesiae: The Calvinist Reform of Morals at Nimes', *SCJ* 18 (1987), 89-115.

⁷⁶ Duke (1994), 2-4.

⁷⁷ Baker (1992), 41-4; Gordon (1994), 76-78.

which would be acceptable to Bullinger.⁷⁸

Nevertheless, the preceding analysis does reveal an underlying distinction between churches led primarily by followers of Luther and those which looked to Switzerland for their models. In the former, Luther's aversion to the coercion of belief cast a long shadow. Moral conduct was to be shaped by education, not sanctions. Pre-communion examination took its place in this approach, but more direct discipline was approached tentatively. Expectations of civil involvement were low. The territorial consistorial system was slow to take shape.

The contrast with the Switzerland was marked. Here, Zwingli's identification of the church and civil communities, a humanist-influenced understanding of the Christian life in which law had a positive role, and communal pressure for civic autonomy, generated an alternative interpretation of the key texts. Christian discipline pertained to outward conformity of life and was the province of the magistrate. However, in the hands of Oecolampadius, Bucer and Calvin, this notion underwent a crucial transition. The priority of discipline was upheld, but as a church function, distinct from the civil sword in its aims and means. In the case of Bucer, Lutheran conceptions of evangelical freedom contributed an important perspective: discipline is the responsibility of all believers. The Genevan exercise of discipline through a formal presbyteral consistory was a further variant to this approach, though it preserved its pastoral focus. We shall see that Martyr's views belong in the Oecolampadian stream, but also make their own contribution.

Discipline in Martyr's thought: the mark of holy living

Martyr's principal treatments of discipline appear in the *Una semplice dichiarazione*, in the I Corinthians commentary, notably in its *De excommunicatione* scholion, and in two short excursuses in his posthumously published Zürich lectures on Samuel. He also refers to the issue in the Kings *De schismate* treatise. With the exception of the I Corinthians *locus*, his comments on discipline are rarely extensive. Nevertheless, they span the whole of his northern career, demonstrating the persistence of his interest and enabling the development of his thought to be discerned. Only limited variation is

⁷⁸ Bruce Gordon, 'Calvin and the Swiss Reformed Churches', in *Calvinism in Europe, 1540-1620*, eds. A. Pettegree, A. Duke and G. Lewis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 78-80; Burcher to Bullinger, 29 Oct 1548, *OL* II, 642.

apparent between his earlier and later views: the convictions of the Zürich doctor are not markedly different from those of the Florentine *émigré*.⁷⁹

Medieval penitential practice makes little contribution to Martyr's approach and the Lutheran translation of auricular confession into pre-communion examination finds no parallel. His evident familiarity with penitential theology serves mainly to provide him with evidence for repudiating the practice. This is particularly clear in the long scholion *De poenitentia* which concludes his Samuel commentary.⁸⁰ Here he rejects the classification of penance as a sacrament and criticises its late medieval interpretation. Its typical division into contrition, confession and satisfaction is examined in depth in order to demonstrate its lack of biblical and patristic support.⁸¹ He concludes that private confession is not commanded in Scripture. Indeed, *Omnis utriusque sexus* is evidence of its human invention. To require exhaustive confession in fact creates anxiety, and withholds assurance of salvation. Though he concedes that it was originally instituted so that sinners might be helped by prayers and pastoral comfort, he does not propose its revival.⁸² Similarly, satisfaction's origin in the requirement for evidence of repentance does not justify its retention.⁸³ Rather, sacramental penance is to be replaced by genuine repentance. This is fostered not by a formal process, but by preaching the depth of human need, the death of Christ as the assurance of forgiveness, and the joyful consequences of genuine repentance in believer, church and heaven.⁸⁴

Martyr's descriptions of the overall character of discipline tend to be brief. Nevertheless, the context they establish for his lengthier analyses of its two principal components, fraternal correction and excommunication, is significant. In particular, they indicate that discipline was related closely to Martyr's conception of the Christian life and the health of the Christian community. Its punitive aspect is subordinate to its

⁷⁹ Martyr succeeded Wolfgang Capito in his post at the Strasbourg Academy. Capito's disciplinary thought, especially on the role of the magistrate and the nature of excommunication as a work of love not an exercise of power, has some similarities to Martyr's own position. Martyr's library included at least one of Capito's works dealing with the issue. Kittelson (1975), esp 202-5; Donnelly (1976a), 214.

⁸⁰ The scholion is found in *Sam*, 324^r-333^r, following the commentary on 2 Sam 24.18-25; it is reprinted in *LC* III.8.1-38.

⁸¹ *LC* III.8.20-37; s 37 summarises Martyr's argument on the medieval distinctions.

⁸² *LC* III.8.25, 35.

⁸³ *LC* III.8.32.

⁸⁴ *LC* III.8.1-3, 38.

positive role in maintaining the body of Christ.⁸⁵

The opening sentences of the *Una semplice dichiarazione* announce this interest in the relationship between belief and life: 'The condition and counsel of the wise and prudent is inconsistent with careless living'. Such men (Martyr has classical exemplars in mind) are remarkable since their conduct flows from 'proper motives and sound reasons'. Believers should exhibit a similar correlation of belief and conduct. The ultimate happiness, the goal of the Christian profession of divine wisdom, consists in knowing how to act. Martyr's exposition of the creed is to this end: 'The sum total and impact of Christianity bears not merely on the use of a day, or the way one lives through a week, but on the ordering of our entire life'.⁸⁶

As we have seen, discipline arises in the context of Martyr's discussion of the four means of church growth. 'Brotherly correction' is his chosen description of the third instrument. The term 'discipline' here has not attained the priority which it has in later works, though it is employed to describe excommunication, dominically instituted as a last resort when 'the help of holy correction' fails. Martyr's thought here is in transition. He sees the two instruments comprising one function, but provides no general description.⁸⁷

Nevertheless, continuity with subsequent emphases is apparent, not least in the twofold stress on correction and excommunication and their connection with the moral health of the church. McLelland comments that the *Una semplice dichiarazione* 'is more a document of Italian Evangelism than of northern Reform'.⁸⁸ However, neither the work's emphasis on the knowledge of God and interest in the ethical consequences of belief, nor the hints of Aristotelian patterns of thought evident in its phraseology and reasoning, were alien to the Reformed circles in which he was beginning to move. Subsequent works display development of this foundation, especially in regard to

⁸⁵ LC IV.5 collects a number of Martyr's writings on discipline under the heading: *De disciplina et politia Ecclesiae, ac nominatim de excommunicatione, ordine ecclesiastico, templis, et eorum ornamentis*. The twenty-six numbered sections of the chapter in the 1576 edition became twenty-four in the 1580 and subsequent editions, omitting a passage from *Mel* dealing with Elijah's execution of the prophets of Baal (2 Kings 18.40). Sections 1-18 relate to discipline. The first is an editorial composite of material from *Cor.* (three sentences) and *Sam* (two excursuses), introducing discipline and dealing with *correctio fraterna*. The remaining seventeen sections present the *De excommunicatione* scholion in full. CP follows the 1580 LC.

⁸⁶ USD, 3-4; PML 1: 27-8.

⁸⁷ USD, 139-40; PML 1: 66-7.

⁸⁸ PML 1: 19.

discipline: a determination to align conduct with belief is a persistent theme.⁸⁹

A succinct definition from I Corinthians 10.10, later selected by Masson to head the *Loci* chapter on the subject, summarises Martyr's position. Discipline is

nothing else but a power of the church, granted by God, by which the will and actions of believers are made conformable to the divine law, which is done by instruction, admonitions, correction, and finally by punishments, and also by excommunication if necessary.⁹⁰

Though this description is brief, its elements are clear, and suggest a maturity in Martyr's thought. Discipline is divinely-granted ecclesiastical power. The textual context for his remarks is significant: in exercising this authority in Corinth Paul was discharging a divine commission to secure the church's outward purity. Further, the authority to discipline is given to the church, not the magistrate. The definition also indicates the instruments of discipline. These are very broadly conceived, indicating that the disciplinary function is closely related to the ministry of the word. Conformity to divine law was to be achieved by a range of means, and it is teaching, warnings, and correction which have priority. Penalties and excommunication are held in reserve. Discipline thus embraces a range of pastoral functions, whose object is to encourage and secure obedience. Though punishment of wrong is not discipline's primary object, the example of Korah's rebellion in Numbers 16 is a warning of the eternal condemnation which awaits those who do not repent of sin.⁹¹

In this passage, Martyr does not elaborate further. However, the breadth of his conception of discipline finds a later parallel in the *De schismate* scholion. As we have already noted, in enumerating the reasons for separation from the Roman church,

⁸⁹ For example, a 1556 letter to the leaders of the Reformed churches in Poland, in which Martyr urges them to press on with reform and especially to introduce discipline, opens with a strong exhortation to 'join innocence and purity of life to the truth of God'. Knowledge without its fruit risks condemnation. True belief has its ethical consequence. The letter especially urges the early introduction of discipline, lamenting its absence as 'a serious disaster' and hinting at the reluctance of many churches to 'shoulder this so salutary yoke during the foundation stage of their Reformation'. *LC* 1109-10, 1111-12; *PML* 5: 142-3, 147-8.

⁹⁰ *Cor*, 132^r: Paulus autem disciplinam retinebat quam diligentissime; quae nihil aliud est, quam facultas Ecclesiae, divinitus concessa, qua voluntas et actiones fidelium reddantur conformes divinae legi: quod fit doctrina, monitionibus, correctione, demumque poenis, et si opus fuerit excommunicatione. Qui pharmacum huiusmodi ferre non possunt, adversus bonos pastores obloquuntur, quod officio suo bene fungantur. Sed a Domino, cuius legationem obeunt, nunquam deserti sunt, neque deserentur. *LC* IV.5.1.

⁹¹ *Cor*, 133^r.

Martyr here distinguishes necessary, optional and evil features of churches. The *notae ecclesiae*, he observes, belong to the category of necessity. His description of the third mark is unusual. It is 'a holy and virtuous life, so that in their relationship to God and one another, people may live modestly, piously, and justly'. He concludes, 'all this relates to discipline'. The approach is revealing. In this late work, the third mark is not defined as the exercise of a juridical power or even the practice of a ministerial office. Rather, it consists in the maintenance of Christian obedience and right relationships. Though he alleges that the Roman hierarchy has relaxed discipline's bridle, the exercise of a formal office is not his main concern.⁹²

When Martyr defends his inclusion of the third mark later in *De schismate*, this interest in the quality of the church's life recurs. The care of discipline is here a responsibility of the church. 'A discipline that is not despised' is practised by the churches of the Reformation. All three marks are implied by Christ's purpose for the church outlined in Ephesians 5.25-27. 'To present the church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle', refers to 'the disciplines (*exercitia*) of a holy life' and constitutes them as the third mark. The process is a continual one: 'By godly living, the desires and pollutions of the flesh are daily put away by the faithful'.⁹³ The absence of reference to brotherly correction and excommunication is striking: in this late work, Martyr twice elects to define discipline in terms of holiness and godly living, rather than as a corrective process. The earlier emphasis on discipline as a power of the church is not abandoned: his polemical intention is to assert that the new churches maintain a disciplinary order. Nevertheless, his concept of the function embraces more than formal process.

These passages establish a preliminary framework for approaching Martyr's detailed treatments of discipline. Discipline relates to the whole of Christian life. Far from his thought is the priority of eucharistic purity or the the legacy of auricular confession. Rather, he sets discipline firmly in the pastoral context of encouraging godly living: the spur to obedience is more important than the restraining hand of admonition and penalty. Nevertheless, the exercise of discipline is an act of obedience. Discipline is one of the three ways in which God through his ministers governs the church.⁹⁴ Both the

⁹² *Mel*, 103^r; *PML* 1: 175.

⁹³ *Mel*, 105^v; *PML* 1: 187. In the 1544 *Una semplice dichiarazione*, Martyr argues that this verse particularly applies to the baptismal signification of the remission of sins; *USD*, 153-4; *PML* 1: 71.

⁹⁴ *Cor*, 5^r.

gospel and the law enjoin its exercise.⁹⁵ A church without a functioning biblical discipline is deficient and, *in extremis*, the magistrate is to ensure that the ministers of the church employ this instrument of ecclesiastical government.⁹⁶

This understanding of discipline's overall purpose emerges more fully within his discussions of brotherly correction and excommunication. Here, concern for the condition of the sinner is combined with an awareness of the value of discipline to the church. Both individual and church are edified when the goal of discipline, the restoration of the sinner to fellowship with God and his fellow believers, is achieved. Discipline is an act of service to a believer, with ecclesial consequences. Hence, discussing brotherly correction in the *Una semplice dichiarazione*, Martyr contrasts its neglect with the alacrity with which fallen draught animals are assisted: 'yet when our brothers fall, we leave them under the burden of their guilt, depriving them of the help of holy correction'. The restorative purpose is spelt out in the discussion of excommunication which follows: 'It was intended by Christ, in his supreme wisdom and ineffable charity, to be used in such a way as to reform those who are warned'. Its ostracism induces repentance and hence enables restoration. This purpose is accompanied by three others. First, discipline enables the church to maintain freedom from accusation of tolerating sin. Second, it makes evident Christ's prohibition of a 'dishonest and corrupt lifestyle'. Finally, the separation which excommunication involves safeguards vulnerable believers from malign examples.⁹⁷

In later works, these objectives are amplified. Towards the end of *De excommunicatione*, Martyr devotes a section to the purposes of the sanction. Five ends are succinctly summarised. First, corresponding to the 1544 emphasis on purity, it preserves the good reputation of the church. The second purpose is the reform of the excommunicate, inducing the repentance which enables restoration. Third, discipline safeguards other church members from corruption. His fourth point is without parallel elsewhere: severe punishment deters sin. Finally, excommunication's exercise averts divine wrath and chastisement. God withholds his own sanctions while men intervene.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ *Sam*, 17^r: Igitur non tantum Evangelio, sed etiam lege monere et corripere fratrem iubemur.

⁹⁶ *Cor*, 68^r.

⁹⁷ *USD*, 140-1; *PML* 1: 67.

⁹⁸ *Cor*, 69^r: Agendum modo est in quem finem excommunicatio sit adhibenda. Cum primis, ne ecclesia male audiat. Deinde, ut sic explosus emendetur. Praeterea ut alii non corrumpantur, quemadmodum ab una ove scabiosa reliquae etiam inficiuntur. Quarto loco, ut severitas huius iudicii deterreat a peccando. Denique ut ira et supplicia quae a Deo impendent, evitentur. Nam dum homines animadvertunt, manus Dei poenas retrahit. Quod si illi cessaverint, persequitur Deus suas iniurias.

However, the section which follows indicates that the second goal has priority. Excommunication was chiefly established for the restoration of the sinner's inward communion with God. Discipline fulfils its purpose when fellowship with God is restored. We shall see later how Martyr understands the church's sanction to affect the spiritual status of an offender. Nevertheless, the restoration of communion with God also has ecclesial consequences. This is strongly suggested by a related comment: the power of excommunication was given not for destruction, but for the edification of the church.⁹⁹ The church is built up not only through the protection discipline affords, but also through the reconciliation it makes possible. The recovery of the sinner is thus also a restoration of the church.

The two passages on *correctio fraterna* in the Samuel commentary complement this. Commenting on the immorality of Eli's sons in 1 Samuel 2.22, Martyr's argues for the necessity of correction in church, state and family. In this passage, the purity of the church has priority. Eli, he contends, was too lenient.¹⁰⁰ *Correctio fraterna* properly aims to bring the sinner to repentance.¹⁰¹ Analysing correction using the four-fold causes, he identifies the removal of evil from church as its final end or purpose. Every believer shares responsibility for this.¹⁰² This is not a new development: frequent citation of the Deuteronomic injunction to purge the evil from among the people of God in the Corinthians commentary shows that the purity of the church had always been significant for Martyr.¹⁰³ It is the holiness of the church which makes restoration necessary: purification of the church is achieved when the offender repents of his sin. The emphasis on restoration is repeated in the second excursus, occasioned by Nathan's admonition of David in 2 Samuel 12. Martyr here observes that salvific intent should govern the exercise of discipline. A mean is to be observed between timid

⁹⁹ *Ibid*: Estque potissimum inventa excommunicatio ad illius praecipuae interiorisque cum Deo communionis instaurationem. Et semper nobiscum debemus repetere, potestatem non ad eversionem, verum ad aedificationem Ecclesiae datam esse.

¹⁰⁰ *Sam*, 17^r: Eli quidem suos filios monuit, sed molli brachio pro gravitate criminum.

¹⁰¹ *Sam*, 17^r: Est igitur actio ad disciplinam pertinens, qua cum de lapsis de peccatis eorum expostulamus ex charitate, monentes eos ut resipiscant, iuxta modum et formam a Christo expositam, quo malum de medio auferatur.

¹⁰² *Sam*, 17^r: Finis: ut malum de medio fidelium auferatur, quod pio cuique in Ecclesia curandum est, quoad eius fieri potest.

¹⁰³ Dt 13.5, 17.7, 19.19, 21.21, 24, 24.7; quoted in I Corinthians 5.13 and referred to by Martyr in his commentary on this verse, in *De excommunicatione*, and elsewhere; *Cor*, 66r and following. Martyr differs from Augustine, with whose *Contra epistolam Parmeniani* he was familiar, in giving the purity of the church precedence over its visible unity; Augustine, *Contra ep. Parm.*, III.5-11, *PL* 43: 86-91.

reproach and excessive harshness. Otherwise the offender is unlikely to be led to the salvation which is admonition's purpose.¹⁰⁴

Such passages disclose the purposes of discipline. Two main ends are served. First, discipline intends the rescue of the sinner through a process of admonition and, if necessary, punishment. This restoration is twofold: to the visible society of the earthly church, and to the inward communion which the believer has with God. Second, discipline promotes the health and growth of the church, maintaining its health and reputation, and preserving its members from corruption. The two goals are not independent of each other: the restoration of the sinner also builds the church. More detailed examination of Martyr's thought confirms this thesis that his main concern is for a functioning pastoral practice based on a secure exegetical foundation.

Correctio fraterna

In discussing discipline Martyr generally gives first place to the dominical commands of Matthew 18.15-17 which for him refer primarily to *correctio fraterna*. In *Una semplice dichiaratione*, he alleges: 'This is based on the order of Christ recorded in Saint Matthew, where he deals with brotherly correction'.¹⁰⁵ Excommunication is but the final step of this process, not a separate institution.¹⁰⁶ In 1551, Martyr observes that Christ adds the injunction on excommunication 'when he had taught about brotherly correction'.¹⁰⁷

In both *De excommunicatione* and the *Samuel loci*, other Scriptures are adduced to confirm this understanding. In the 1 Samuel 2.22 excursus, Martyr quotes Galatians 6.1 and II Thessalonians 3.15 to support his contention that this process was not of human invention but authorised by divine law. From the Old Testament he adds Leviticus

¹⁰⁴ *Sam*, 237^r: Quod ad primum caput attinet, ponamus ob oculos quae observanda sint in fraterna correctione. Videndum, ut duo extrema caveamus, et mediocritatem servemus. Ex una parte cavendum, ne blanda et adulatoria oratione utamur, qua vitia potius foveamus, quam removeamus. Ex altera parte, ne nimis duram aut crudam admonitionem adhibeamus, ne potius hominem a salute avertamus, quam ad eam adducamus. Mediocritas servanda, quam Christus servari vult Matthaei 18. capite.

¹⁰⁵ *USD*, 154; *PML* 1: 71.

¹⁰⁶ *USD*, 140; *PML* 1: 67: This might be followed by excommunication only as a last resort, ordained by Christ for the incorrigible.

¹⁰⁷ *Cor*, 66^v: Ex Evangelio facile cognoscimus quam necessario haberi debeat in Ecclesia Matth. 18 cum de fraterna correctione Christus docuisset, adiecit: Quod si Ecclesiam non audierit, esto tibi ut Ethnicus et publicanus.

19.17-18. Together such texts demonstrate that both the law and the gospel command warning and correction.¹⁰⁸ *De excommunicatione* also cites the Galatians verse, as evidence of the need for patience and gentleness in admonition.¹⁰⁹

In the light of this approach it is not surprising in *De excommunicatione* to find the more severe sanction of excommunication placed firmly within a corrective context. Excommunication follows the failure of admonition, which is the dominically-commanded first resort in the case of public as well as private sin. To proceed to excommunication without the use of admonition is to deprive the sinner of the opportunity for repentance. Indeed, *correctio fraterna* is no technical preliminary. Rather, it is an opportunity repeatedly to impress on the sinner the gravity of the offence, the impending divine anger and punishment, and the scandalising of the church, in the hope of provoking repentance. This is more likely to be accomplished if rebuke is administered gently, as from a friend not an enemy. Hence admonition is to be a patient process. If repentance is forthcoming, no further action is required. The penitent is already won back to Christ, and discipline has achieved its end. Excommunication is a last resort. It should not be initiated precipitately. Only after an offender has failed to respond to two or three warnings before witnesses, and then to the admonition of the rulers of the church, is it invoked.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ *Sam*, 17^F: Neque genus hoc actionis ab hominibus est inventum, sed ipsius Dei lege sanctitum. Christus ut in Evangelio scribitur, ait, Si peccaverit in te frater tuus, argue eum inter te et illum solum. Et Paulus ad Galat. Si praeoccupatus fuerit frater tuus in aliquo delicto, vos qui spirituales estis, omni lenitate illum instruite. Et 2 ad Thessal. Eos non existimetis, ut hostes, verum admonete ut fratres. Et in Levit. scribitur cap. 19. Ne odio habeas proximum tuum, sed feras eum, corrigo peccantem, ne portes peccatum eius, ne ulciscaris, aut serves odium contra eum, sed amabis proximum tuum, ut teipsum. Igitur non tantum Evangelio, sed etiam lege monere et corripere fratrem iubemur.

¹⁰⁹ *Cor*, 66^V.

¹¹⁰ *Cor*, 66^V: Unde apparet, in omni peccato tam occulto quam publico opus esse fraterna correctione. Quae oportet, ut non adhibeatur molliter et perfunctiore: Sed gravissime poni debet ob oculos peccanti transgressionis pondus, ira Dei accensa et concitata in ipsum, supplicium quod illum manet, scandalum denique quo laesit Ecclesiam. Lenis attamen reprehensio sit, ut quae ab amico animo prodeat. Alioquin si te suum inimicum existimaverit, nullo cum fructu eum corripies. [. . .] Si admonitionibus cesserit qui lapsus erat, polliceaturque bona fide vitam se mutaturum, atque lachrymis et peccati confessione poenitentiam ac dolorem testetur, auferat scandala et peccatorum occasiones, admonitio ibi gradum sistet. Frater siquidem iam Christo est lucrifactus. Sin vero audire contempserit, bis aut ter atque testibus adhibitis monitus, ad Ecclesiae praefectos deferatur, a quibus item monebitur. Illos autem si spreverit, referant presbyteri negotium ad Christi plebem, et ex instituto Apostoli (nisi prius resipuerit) consentiente universa Ecclesia, excommunicetur.

The most systematic treatment of *correctio fraterna* is the commentary on 1 Samuel 2.22. Martyr's definition, analysed using the fourfold causes, is set in the context of discipline generally. The scriptural basis is outlined, and the passage concludes with remarks stressing the duty of believers to practise this mutual help. Marten's translation preserves Martyr's concision:

Reproving is an action pertaining to discipline, whereby of charity we are earnest with them that are fallen as touching their sins, warning them to repent according to the manner and form set forth by Christ, to the intent that evil may be taken away from among us.¹¹¹

The explanation expands this. First, *correctio fraterna* is not a preliminary to discipline, but part of it. As in the home or state, discipline may require more than warnings, and include punishment. It is only at this point that responsibility is assumed by the rulers of the church. When brotherly correction does not bring amendment of life, further action falls to the pastor of a church, whose role is parallel to that of the father in a family or the civil magistrate in a state.¹¹² *Correctio fraterna* itself, however, is the responsibility of every believer. The ministerial exercise of discipline is preceded by its informal practice in the congregation.

The analysis which immediately follows the definition amounts to an exposition of each of the successive clauses. *Charitas* is the efficient cause. Correction is not just if it proceeds from anger or hatred. The obedient exercise of discipline requires right motives. The material cause is 'grievous sins'. Lighter sins are excluded from *correctio fraterna*, though Martyr does not indicate here how these are distinguished. The formal cause is the process (*modus*) established by Christ, a reference to Matthew 18.15-17. The *finis* of this correction, already noted, is the removal of evil from among the

¹¹¹ CP IV.5.1; *Sam*, 17^r: Nunc de correctione, qua Eli filios suos coarguit, est dicendum. Quae res cum in ecclesia, tum Repub. et in omni familia pernecessaria est. Est igitur actio ad disciplinam pertinens, qua cum de lapsis de peccatis eorum expostulamus ex charitate, monentes eos ut resipiscant, iuxta modum et formam a Christo expositam, quo malum de medio auferatur.

¹¹² *Sam*, 17^r: Nec tamen correctio universam disciplinam continet, quia neque pater neque pastor ecclesiae, neque magistratus civilis debent sinere peccata sic abire: quia non pauci sunt, apud quos monitio fraterna nullius est momenti. Quare pater filium peccantem, si vitam non emendavit, et magistratus civem contumacem, acerbius quam monitionibus punire debent: pastor fratrem pergentem inordinate vivere, graviore disciplina coercebit.

believers, a universal concern.¹¹³ The passage ends with an amplification of this conviction that brotherly correction is the responsibility of all. Citations from both testaments reinforce this emphasis, and Martyr again argues *a fortiori* from the injunction to assist an adversary's fallen pack animal. To neglect the errant brother is a culpable failure of responsibility.¹¹⁴ This is characteristic: brotherly love grieves to see a fellow believer in error and takes the initiative to achieve restoration.

Shortly after this excursus, the commentary returns to *correctio fraterna*, responding to the objection that the doctrine of election renders admonition futile, an issue Martyr had previously addressed in a letter to Lucca. He argues, rather, that it is through correction that the predestining purpose of God is achieved. The elect believer may fall, but through admonition he is restored. In the case of the reprobate, however, correction will not achieve its end. Since we are ignorant of God's saving will for individuals, the doctrine of predestination need not affect the exercise of discipline.¹¹⁵

The same concerns are apparent in the briefer 2 Samuel 12 passage. Martyr here outlines a proper balance between severity and leniency in practising correction. Nevertheless, it is dangerous to allow sin to go uncorrected. Though Nathan delayed in warning David, his purpose is unknown: we should not conclude that brotherly correction should await an opportune moment. Paul encouraged Timothy to preach in season and out. To delay brotherly correction in the hope of a more propitious

¹¹³ *Sam*, 17^r: Efficiens causa est charitas, quia non est iusta correctio, si ex odio ira, vel invidia proficiscatur. Materia vero circa quam versatur, peccata sunt eaque gravia, cum leviora errata non pertineant Correctionem. Forma vero, est modus a Domino praescriptus. Finis: ut malum de medio fidelium auferatur, quod pio cuique in Ecclesia curandum est, quoad eius fieri potest.

¹¹⁴ *Sam*, 17^r: Et certe si mandatur, ut asinum inimici nostri sub onere labentem sublevemus, quanto magis praecipitur, ut labenti fratri subveniamus? Altero item loco, id est, Levit. 20 Deus lege cavet, ne quis caeco offendiculum: sed potius eum reducat in viam. Fratres autem graviter peccantes cupiditatibus excaecantur, et aberrant a viam. Quare a nobis praeteriri nequeunt citra culpam.

¹¹⁵ *Sam*, 18^r: Ita etiam nos argutulis hisce cavillatoribus dicemus, Si qui lapsus est, fuerit praedestinatus, eum nihilominus corripiemus, ut effectus praedestinationis in eo compleatur. Sin vero ad reprobos pertinet, illum admonuisse nihil oberit. Divina etenim decreta non auferunt salutis media, quae non minus Deus praedestinavit suis electis, quam extremam salutem. Nos decet ratione ac via ordinaria ingredi. Nam quid occulta sua voluntate Deus constituerit de singulis hominibus, ignoramus. The letter to the believers in Lucca dates from 1556: *LC* 1102-4; *PML* 5: 162-5.

occasion is mistaken.¹¹⁶

Martyr's aspirations for brotherly correction were ambitious. In both early and later works he envisages a mutual discipline being exercised informally throughout the church. Further, whereas the teaching and administration of the sacraments are in the hands of duly chosen ministers, the exercise of discipline is for every believer. Its use was to be motivated by charity and driven by the desire to see both the errant brother and the purity of the church restored. In this conviction that this ministry of admonition and encouragement was shared by all, his thought is closest to Martin Bucer's. He combines this with a strong sense of the role of *correctio* in maintaining the purity of the church. This recalls Oecolampadian emphases, though without the Basel emphasis on the sanctity of the fellowship of the Lord's Table. The affinities of his thought with these reformers, and some differences, are confirmed in his treatment of excommunication.

Excommunication

Una semplice dichiarazione

Though he insists that excommunication is the church's last resort, Martyr's writings on it provide his most extensive treatments of discipline. In the *Una semplice dichiarazione*, attracting his attention in the articles on the church and on the forgiveness of sins, it provides the focus for his discussion of discipline in general.¹¹⁷

He contends that Christ's wise and loving purpose in ordaining excommunication was the reformation of the fallen. This was to be accomplished by bringing the offender to his senses through the experience of ostracism. Like the prodigal of Luke 15, he would then return home with repentance. Further, the passing of this sentence is congregational, as required by the provisions of Matthew 18.17:

¹¹⁶ *Sam*, 237^T: Subit scrupulos, cur Deus non statim ad Davidem, prophetam miserit, sed eum tam diu in luto haerere passus sit? Putant nonnulli nos hinc doceri, Correctionem fraternam opportuna tempora expectanda esse: si enim cupiditates in hominibus aliquantum residerint, sunt tractabiliores. Ego non sum istius sententiae. Nam quo magis peccatum sinimus progredi, eo altiores radices agit. Paulus Timotheum suum hortatur, ut praedicet sermonem, tempestiue ac intempestiue, instet, arguet, et increpet. Principiis obstandum est. Concilia Dei arcana sunt, nec ratione humana pervestigari possunt.

¹¹⁷ *USD*, 139-44, 147-58; *PML* 1: 66-8, 69-72.

If plain admonitions did not bring about amendment, whether of individuals or whole congregations, then Jesus Christ our Lord provided that his beloved believers solemnly assembled by his Spirit and authority, should separate those who persist in evil from the holy company of the believing.¹¹⁸

Excommunication here is distinctively a communal sanction. The reference to the Spirit suggests that, though the Matthean provisions are its basis, I Corinthians 5.4 already colours Martyr's thought. He explicitly cites the letter in prescribing the form of the congregational meeting, envisaging a formal process involving the body of believers to which the offender belongs and from which their judgment would exclude him. The proper place for disciplinary decision and proclamation is the gathering of the whole church 'where the word of God is publicly preached'. Such practice would rescue the sanction from the disrepute into which it had fallen; public and congregational discipline, unlike its papal exercise, would bear sound fruit.

The scope of this public discipline is prescribed by Scripture. Again, it is Paul's words to the Corinthians which outline the sins which are 'wounded by this knife': an allusion to the preceding verses reveals that I Corinthians 5.9-11 is in Martyr's mind. In the article on forgiveness of sins, this public discipline is said to apply only to open sins, 'which by their evil example offend and scandalise whoever hears and knows of them'.¹¹⁹

The relationship between the church's discipline and divine action also attracts Martyr's comment. He maintains a close connection between the church's legitimate exercise of this power and its celestial counterpart: 'What is bound or loosed on earth by the Church duly assembled would be ratified in heaven, as Christ promised. We see this quite clearly in Paul's words to the Corinthians'.¹²⁰ Together with preaching and the sacraments, the church's public loosing of penitent excommunicates is one of its three means of the remission of sins. The power of the keys was given to the church for this purpose. Their ecclesiastical exercise is therefore ratified in heaven: God forgives whatever the church publicly looses. Indeed, Christ gave the keys to the church so that 'this separation and welcome effected through the ministry of men might not be haphazardly exercised or lightly received'. Martyr explains this by referring to Christ's promise of his continued presence in Matthew 18.19-20. It is his presence which enables his gathered believers to excommunicate or restore an offender to fellowship

¹¹⁸ USD, 140-41; PML 1: 67.

¹¹⁹ USD, 143, 157; PML 1: 68, 72.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

and accounts for the confluence of church and divine action.¹²¹

Finally, the article on the forgiveness of sins indicates Martyr's attitude to traditional penitential practice. 'Seventy-times seven' in Matthew 18.22 implies that forgiveness should be offered without limit. No mention is made of the need for works of penance or any probationary period to test that repentance is genuine. Those who return to the church in repentance must be restored without delay: 'With penitence for sin comes an end to the penalty of excommunication'. Public profession of repentance qualifies for the church's absolution, and the power of the keys means that the penitent are set free, reconciled and fully restored.¹²²

Una semplice dichiarazione reveals that, early in his Protestant career, Martyr already held a clear view of excommunication. Matthew 18.15-18 and I Corinthians 5 govern his thought. Excommunication, though necessary for the sake of individual offender and church alike, is a last resort. It consists more in social ostracism than in sacramental exclusion. It is distinctively an ecclesial sanction, imposed and lifted by the local congregation, in obedience to Christ's command and as an exercise of his authority. These were to prove permanent features of Martyr's thought.

De excommunicatione

This scholion, which follows his commentary on I Corinthians 5, accounts for the greater part of Martyr's writing on the subject.¹²³ At over seven folio pages in length, it provides a comprehensive summary of his position. Its occasion is the situation in the Corinthian church addressed by the Paul. The commentary itself heralds several of its themes.

Expounding I Corinthians 5.2, Martyr observes that it is not sufficient for the church merely to grieve over open, serious sin. It ought to resort to excommunication, whose power has been granted it by Christ. Since this is to be exercised locally, the Corinthian

¹²¹ USD, 154-57; PML 1: 71-2, including the following summary towards the end of the section: We believe that this power is shared among believers on earth. As separation and excommunication are exercised only by the community of believers gathered in Christ, so also we believe with regard to reconciliation and renewed acceptance. And when this is properly done by the community, it is ratified and confirmed by God in heaven.

¹²² USD, 155-56; PML 1: 71-2.

¹²³ Cor, 66^r-69^r.

church was in full possession of this authority. Indeed, churches which fail to exercise this discipline are themselves sinful, as are magistrates who hinder its use rather than encouraging it. For excommunication is the church's *supremus gladius*. Through its use the church is able to go beyond recognising and lamenting sin, and remove it. Despite historical abuse, it is in origin a good instrument, instituted by Christ.¹²⁴

The scholion develops this exposition. The first paragraph, following Martyr's habitual approach, concerns matters of vocabulary and definition. It first gives a brief etymological introduction to the term: excommunication is that by which someone is derived of communion.¹²⁵ Greek and Hebrew roots are identified but not expounded at length. Martyr's formal definition of excommunication immediately follows:

Moreover it may be described from those things which are taught by the apostle in this way: Excommunication is the casting out of an offender from the fellowship of believers, by the judgment of the leaders and with the whole church consenting, by the authority of Christ and the rule of holy Scripture, for the salvation of the one cast out, and of the people of God.¹²⁶

These emphases anticipate the exposition and display considerable continuity with the understanding of excommunication established in the *Una semphice dichiaratione*. Thus, the focus falls on the social ostracism of the offender, rather than sacramental exclusion. The imposition of excommunication requires congregational consent. Dominical institution lies behind the Pauline instructions. Finally, a restorative, salvific function, for both offender and church, governs its use.

The scholion amounts to a commentary on this definition. It discusses the nature of the

¹²⁴ *Cor*, 62^r: Ecclesia non oportet in ipso luctu gradum sistere. Ad excommunicationem progrediatur necesse est, ut hac potestate a Christo sibi tradita salutariter utatur. Si Corinthiorum Ecclesia potestatem hanc non habuisset, facile patebat locus excusationi. Dixissent enim: Istum ideo pertulimus, quod eum adscindere non valuerimus. Consequitur itaque graviter Ecclesias peccare, quae potestate hac sibi tradita non utantur, et magistratus qui obstant, cum iuvare et fovere hoc opus maxime debuerint. Hic est supremus Ecclesiae gladius, in qua non est satis agnovisse peccata quae committuntur, cum id quoque exigatur, ut ea et lugeat, et per excommunicationem resecat.

¹²⁵ *Cor*, 66^r: Excommunicatio, quod attinet ad vocis etymon, est qua exortes communionis aliquos facimus.

¹²⁶ *Cor*, 66^{r-v}: Definietur autem ex his quae ab Apostolo traduntur ad hunc modum: Excommunicatio est facinorosi eiectio a fidelium societate, iudicio primorum atque tota Ecclesia consentiente, autoritate [66v] Christi at Scripturae sanctae regula ad salutem eius qui eiicitur, et populi Dei.

sins subject to the sanction and the extent of the sinner's exclusion. Attention is paid to the process, including the responsibilities of leaders and people. Towards its end the purposes of excommunication are described and the implications for the church's treatment of the excommunicate spelt out. Additionally, Martyr outlines the role of the magistrate and, in a lengthy digression, finds wanting Augustine's view that excommunication should be exercised only where there is no risk of schism.¹²⁷

The authority of Scripture is formally paramount throughout. Appeal is made to a wide range of texts, which usually provide the basis for each section's discussion. Exegesis is confidently expected to resolve the dilemmas which Martyr observes arising in both church history and his own era. The scholion also exemplifies his approach to the Fathers. There is extensive discussion of early church practice, but it is not normative. Martyr both appeals to its example and teaching, but on occasion departs from them.

The second paragraph introduces the relevant biblical material. It comprises a catena of six texts and four other allusions to biblical teaching or incidents. Martyr argues these show that the necessity of excommunication is easily understood from the gospel. The verses are held to speak for themselves, and no exposition is offered. The foundational text is Matthew 18.18: Christ himself appended this injunction, says Martyr, after he had taught about brotherly correction. The verse attracts the paragraph's sole explanatory comment: excommunication ought to be universally accepted since it is authorised by the gospel. Those who want to profess the gospel and yet exclude this element are to be wondered at.¹²⁸

The remaining citations and allusions are drawn from both testaments. The emphasis of the four Old Testament references, including both the Deuteronomic command to purge evil from among the people and Jeremiah's injunction to the exiles to flee from approaching judgment, falls on the obligation to maintain moral and cultic purity.¹²⁹ Adam and Eve's exclusion from Eden, as well as Cain's exile, are cited as examples of

¹²⁷ *Cor*, 68^r-69^r; Augustine, *Contra ep. Parm.*, III, 8-14; *PL* 43: 88-94.

¹²⁸ *Cor*, 66^v: Proinde cum Evangelium sit Christi quoad omnes partes, ab Ecclesia recipiatur oportet, atque illi ubique fides habenda est. Unde sunt mirandi qui volunt Evangelium profiteri, et hanc particulam excludunt.

¹²⁹ Dt 13.5; the other verse quoted is Jer 51.6; there is one unspecific general reference to the requirements of Leviticus (cc11-15, 17-18) for the people of God to avoid impure things and for the separation of the unclean from their company; Martyr specifically notes that lepers were excluded from the camp, (Lv 13.46).

excommunication. Turning to the New Testament, Martyr comments that if no other warrant (*testimonium*) were available for excommunication, the evidence of II Thessalonians 3.14-15 would be sufficient. II John 10-11 and Ephesians 4.11 provide further apostolic authority for the sanction: the citation of the former anticipates his application of excommunication to doctrinal heterodoxy as well as moral conduct.

Subsequent recourse to Scripture is common. When he urges the exercise of discipline in a spirit of gentleness and brotherly love, Galatians 6.1 is again cited. The use of excommunication against doctrinal error as well as moral disobedience, is justified from Romans 16.17, Galatians 1.8, and Titus 3.10. When he contends that excommunication's scope is wider than major sins alone, Martyr cites the vice lists of I Corinthians, Ephesians and Colossians, and also II Thessalonians 3.10-11.¹³⁰

By comparison with the Scriptures, the early church Fathers have a subsidiary authority. Primary among those he cites are Augustine and Cyprian, though Chrysostom and Ambrose are mentioned twice, and Tertullian once. Martyr's respect for these writers is tempered by the primacy of Scripture. Thus, in a discussion of the distinctions of degree among excommunicates observed by the early church, he notes sympathetically the opinions of Cyprian and Chrysostom as well as the decrees of Nicaea. He agrees with Chrysostom that the church must entertain hope for everyone. No one is to be despaired of, and the distinctions observed by the early church were an attempt to preserve this principle while maintaining eucharistic purity. Nevertheless his conclusion is abrupt: 'From the Fathers therefore these degrees are easily gathered, which nevertheless cannot be proved by the holy Scriptures'. He therefore declines to endorse them for his own day.¹³¹

Moreover, where he perceives Scripture to have been misunderstood by the Fathers, Martyr does not shrink from criticism, even among authorities whom he generally respects. In his anti-Donatist treatise *Against the Letter of Parmenian*, Augustine had

¹³⁰ *Cor*, 66^v-67^r.

¹³¹ *Cor*, 67^r. Martyr alights on Cyprian's characteristic description of excommunicates as *abstenti* as evidence for such degrees: eg, Cyprian, *Eps.* 41.2, 59.1, 9, 10; *CSEL* 3: 588-89, 666-67, 676-78; *ANCL* 8: 104, 160, 167-69; *idem*, *De dominica oratione*, 18; *CSEL* 3: 280-81; *ANCL* 8: 411. Martyr's reference to Chrysostom is to *De non anathematizandis vivis atque defunctis*, PG 48: 945-52. Canons eleven and fourteen of the first Council of Nicaea enumerate the degrees of ecclesial admission through which penitent apostates or lapsed catechumens were to pass; *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Norman P. Tanner, 2 vols (London: Sheed and Ward/Washington: Georgetown Univ Press, 1990), I, 11, 14.

argued that the church should refrain from excommunication if it was likely to provoke schism. Preserving church peace had priority over dealing with sin.¹³² Martyr responds to this view in a lengthy digression and seeks to demonstrate how Augustine's exegesis is mistaken. For example, Augustine's citations of the parable of the tares and of Christ's toleration of Judas at the Last Supper are dismissed as misunderstandings of the texts.¹³³

Martyr's confidence in Scripture's capacity to provide the parameters for church discipline pervades the scholion. Concluding, he laments that the practice he describes seems Utopian. Despite its appeal, it is nowhere to be found in operation. Nevertheless, Scripture's provisions are sufficient to remedy the situation.¹³⁴

We turn now to consider the substance of the scholion, examining Martyr's views of the scope and effect of excommunication, and its execution in the church. Though discipline applies to believers whose lives deny their profession, Martyr admits some differentiation within this broad category. 'Lighter sins' are excluded even from the scope of brotherly correction, though he insists that discipline is to be exercised over a wider range than merely public, serious offences. Sins that are originally private become a public concern when the sinner does not respond to warnings, and are therefore referred to the whole church. Moreover, excommunication is also to be used in cases for heresy. Scripture clearly sanctions withdrawal of fellowship from those who teach false doctrine, and this is extended this to the disciplining of those who are infected with heresy.¹³⁵

Turning to the effects of excommunication, Martyr's emphasis falls on its social exclusion. The sanction cuts off the offender from the fellowship of believers. Withholding the sacraments is assumed, but his main interest is in the ostracism excommunication entails. This has limits, since in matters essential to life, continued

¹³² Augustine, *Contra ep. Parm.*, PL 43: 33-108.

¹³³ *Cor*, 68^r-69^r.

¹³⁴ *Cor*, 69^v: Multa enim hac de re obscura esse video, quae saepe infirmiores impediunt atque hoc vehementer doleo, quod de Utopia et republica Platonis mihi videor loquutus: quae licet ut pulchra a multis laudentur, nullibi tamen reperientur.

¹³⁵ *Cor*, 66^v-67^r: Nam peccata etiam non ita publica et omnibus nota, cum fraterna correctione fuerint agitata, per delationem ad Ecclesiam publica efficiuntur. Infecti etiam mala doctrina excommunicantur. In commenting on I Corinthians 5.11, Martyr comments that hidden sins and vices of the mind can scarcely be judged by the church, *ibid*, 66^r.

intercourse with an excommunicate is allowed. Three relationships are singled out for comment. First, believers are allowed to deal with an excommunicated magistrate where necessity demands, since the health of the *res publica* depends on the orderly exercise of rule. Second, the wife or children of an excommunicate are not to withdraw from him. His punishment does not absolve them from the obedience they owe him, but they themselves are not to be shunned by the church. (Indeed, the sentence of excommunication does not apply to anyone apart from the individual sinner, unless implicated in his offence. Martyr approvingly cites Augustine's criticism of Auxilius for excommunicating the household of an offender.¹³⁶) Finally, some commercial transactions can continue: one may trade with an excommunicate, provided no alternative source of supply is available.¹³⁷ Apart from these exceptions, however, offenders are to be avoided in conversation and fellowship, and treated as outsiders.¹³⁸

However, the nature of this ostracism is governed by the restorative purpose of the sanction. Excommunication does not release believers from the obligation to treat the offender with charity and mercy, in regard to both his physical and spiritual needs. The conduct of church and individual towards the fallen brother is to be determined by the goal of restoration. Food and drink should not be withheld. Further, the offender is not deprived of the church's warnings and teaching. He is to continue to receive admonition, instruction and reproof. While Martyr does not specify how this is to be secured, the experience of social and sacramental ostracism is to be tempered by the requirement to keep the excommunicate within earshot of the preaching of the word and continual encouragement to repent.¹³⁹

This has a connection with the relationship between ecclesiastical excommunication and union with Christ. Martyr is concerned to expound the relationship between the disciplinary judgments of the church, and the offender's status before God. Two passages outline this issue. The first arises as he describes the separation effected by

¹³⁶ *Cor*, 67^r; Augustine, *Ep* 250, *NPNF* I, 589-90.

¹³⁷ *Cor*, 67^r.

¹³⁸ *Cor*, 69^v: Subtrahenda est illi familiaris conversatio, quae animi causa fiat, ita tamen ut liberi, uxor, et subditi (quoad magistratum) non eximantur a debitis obsequiis, ne omnia confundantur. Sed interea caveatur, ne ista conversatione assensum eidem crimini praebeant. Quo vero ad alios evitentur excommunicati, cibus cum illis non capiatur, non dicatur eis Ave, verum ut Ethnici et publicani habeantur. Martyr makes similar observations in the body of the commentary, *ibid*, 66r.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*: Non tamen cessandum est a monendo, docendo et corripiendo, neque a cibando et potando, si necessitas urserit. Quia excommunicatio non poterit ulterius extendi, quam charitas et alia divina praecepta patiantur. Cf also comments on I Corinthians 5.11, *Cor*, 66^r.

excommunication. A fellowship exists, he explains, among the *consortium fidelium*. In excommunication, the offender is excluded from the body of believers and hence from this *communio*. But this outward fellowship is distinct from the believer's inward communion with God. The former is external, and constitutes believers as participants both of the sacraments and of the intercourse (*conversatio*) they enjoy with members of the church. The latter is internal and relates to God. Although in *De excommunicatione* he refers to it as communion with God rather than with Christ, it corresponds to the spiritual communion which Martyr describes in commenting on I Corinthians 10. Believers are joined to God by faith, hope, charity and all the virtues.¹⁴⁰

Both sorts of *communio* can be forfeited. The inward *communio* we fall away from through sin, in action which repudiates faith, charity and the other virtues. The deeds of the believer, not the judgment of the church, are the instrument of this separation.¹⁴¹ Excommunication therefore does not terminate, but rather follows and recognises the forfeiting of spiritual *communio*. Its effect is to remove the earthly fellowship, excluding the excommunicate from the sacraments and from the society of believers, and making manifest the grievous sin that has already rendered the offender a stranger to God.¹⁴²

This treatment is developed in the second passage. Here, Martyr cites Romans 8.35, 39, and quotes Isaiah 59.2, in support of his argument that we separate ourselves, by infidelity and other sins, from God. No human sanction is able to effect such a separation. Excommunication is a token (*indicium*), imposed by the church, of this

¹⁴⁰ *Cor*, 67^r: Nunciam dicamus a quibus rebus excludatur qui excommunicatione ab Ecclesia separatur. Id si una voce sit exprimendum, est consortium fidelium, inter quos est communio, quando non cavetur causa religionis commercium. Sed est opportunum, ut communio distinguatur. Una est interior et quoad Deum, cui fide, spe, charitate, atque omnibus virtutibus per spiritum nostrum copulamur, nec non eadem opera cum omnibus in Christum credentibus. Alia vero externa est, qua nimirum sumus participes cum sacramentorum, tum etiam conversationis cum membris ecclesiae.

As in the later discussion in chapter 10, Martyr does not here distinguish between the 'spiritual' and 'mystical' communion which believers have with God.

¹⁴¹ This accordingly corresponds to Martyr's suggestion in the *De iustificatione* scholion, that sin can deprive a believer of his justification; Donnelly (1976a), 154. We have already seen how, in *Sam*, Martyr would maintain a compatible position, arguing that *correctio fraterna* was a divinely appointed means of recovering the elect when they lapse.

¹⁴² *Cor*, 67^r: Ab illa priore communione nequaquam eiicit nos ut prima et praecipua causa excommunicatio: verum inde quisque suo peccato excidit, dum agit contra fidem, charitati adversatur, atque caeteris virtutibus resistit. Sed a posteriori nos repellit excommunicatio, ne sacramentorum et societatis fidelium simus participes, et pendet omnino posterior a priore. Non enim alia de causa quisquam excommunicatur, nisi quod iam a Deo et a proximorum charitate per aliquod grave peccatum, cognitum et manifestum, declaratur alienus.

prior declension. It excludes the offender from the sacraments and the fellowship of the church, and thereby discloses his separation from God. Like the Old Testament priest certifying the infection of leprosy, excommunication publicises the inward apostasy.¹⁴³

It is in this context that the binding and loosing of Matthew 18.18 is to be understood. We have seen that Martyr argues elsewhere for a conjunction between the divine and human in ministry.¹⁴⁴ Accordingly, the church is said to bind and loose because the sentence of excommunication is not empty when it concurs with the word of God. Indeed, the church's judgment makes the sinner's separation more grievous.¹⁴⁵ The presence of 'the power of our Lord Jesus Christ' with the church assembled in judgment, shows that excommunication, though exercised by the church, is a divine rather than human sentence.¹⁴⁶ Excommunication is an example of this confluence of divine and human action. God works together with the judgments of the church. Indeed, the physical ailments and unclean spirits which God may send to trouble the excommunicated are a demonstration of this conjunction.¹⁴⁷

The effectiveness of excommunication is therefore connected with inward spiritual condition. An unrepentant sinner by his own hand forfeits communion with both God and the church. The church's judgment ratifies and declares this reality, giving ecclesial expression to this separation. The sentence both reveals and implements in the church the spiritual condition of the offender. However, it also provides the means by which, through this conjunction, repentance can be most effectively secured as God, through his

¹⁴³ *Cor*, 67^v: Excommunicatio vero, quem indicium est huius interioris apostasiae (non quidem certum et necessarium tamen haud vulgare, sed vehementer pertimescendum) ab Ecclesia Christi debet infligi. Idcirco autem dixi non esse certum et necessarium indicium separationis a Deo et a membris Christi, quoniam fieri quandoque potest, ut bonus et innocens excommunicetur a corrupto iudicio praesidentium in Ecclesia, ut non semel factum novimus in conciliis et inter patres, qui alioquin pro sanctis habebantur. Quamobrem excommunicatione non dicimur proprie a Deo separari, sed ostendi decerni separatos esse.

¹⁴⁴ Eg, *Cor*, 35^v-36^r, on ministry.

¹⁴⁵ *Cor*, 67^v: Neque huic sententiae obstat, quod Ecclesia dicitur ligare et solvere. Quoniam hoc iudicium quando ad verbum Dei quadrat non est inane, et cum Deus illi cooperetur, separatio quae iam misero contigerat, gravior efficitur. Nunc vero id tantum dicimus, in excommunicatione id perpetuo evenire, ut apostasia et defectus a Deo illam praecedat.

¹⁴⁶ *Cor*, 62^v: Indicat non humanum esse, verum divinum hoc iudicii genus. Quare timeri vehementer a fidelibus debet, et summa iustitia atque prudentia tractari.

¹⁴⁷ *Cor*, 67^v: Atque ita cooperatur Deus huic iudicio Ecclesiae, quando iuxta regulam sacrarum literarum decernit, ut flagella et immundos spiritus ad vexandos excommunicatos immittat. De Ambrosio legimus, Stelliconis scribam, ubi excommunicasset illum, a malo spiritu gravissime coepisse vexari. Et haec fecit Deus, quo declaret in coelis ratum habere, quod in terris iuste ligatum fuerit.

church and ministers, seeks restoration.

This understanding is corroborated in Martyr's description of the purposes of excommunication. Considering the question whether it should cast the excommunicate into despair, he argues that the reverse is the case. There is every ground for hoping well of the outcome. With the exception of the sin against the Holy Spirit, which the church has in any case lost the capacity to discern, there is always hope for a sinner's salvation. The excommunicate is not so far removed from the church that he is deprived of the means of repentance, through its exhortations, comfort and prayer. These continue to be the charitable duties of the church towards him. The object of excommunication is to bring the offender to a genuine repentance through which restores him not only to the fellowship of believers, but also to communion with God.¹⁴⁸

The disciplinary procedure indicated in the *Una semplice dichiarazione* acquires some nuances in *De excommunicatione*. Based on the Matthean model, it is consistent with Paul's intention in I Corinthians 5. Excommunication now arises specifically at the end of a process involving several steps, in which the church's leaders are progressively more prominent. First, brotherly admonition culminates in warnings given in the presence of witnesses. If this fails, an offender is reported to the rulers (*praefecti, presbyteri*) of the church, for further warning. If he remains impenitent, the matter is referred to the people. If still obdurate, he is then excommunicated with the consent of the whole church.¹⁴⁹ The imposition and lifting of excommunication, as we have seen, is one of the most weighty matters of church government, and requires congregational

¹⁴⁸ *Cor*, 67^I: Et dum interrogamur quonam depellantur excommunicati, respondebimus, non certe eo ut desperent, aut se deploratae salutis existiment. Dum enim sumus in hac vita, nunquam salutis spes est deponenda, nisi peccatum in Spiritum sanctum inciderit, quod cum non intelligatur, nisi privata quapiam revelatione demonstretur, spes non est abiicienda. Habuit antiquitus Ecclesia donum probandi spiritus, unde hoc peccati genus fortasse agnoscebatur. Sed hodie cum non habeamus compertum quando eo quispiam detineatur, de omnibus oportet bene sperare: et quamquam excommunicatus, quod attinet ad ipsum, ab ecclesia sit divisus, nihilominus Ecclesiae non deest quod erga illum agat. Nam eum adhortabitur, consolabitur, atque orabit pro eius conversione, et denique ut cupida salutis ipsius, summa charitate adhuc eum prosequetur.

¹⁴⁹ *Cor*, 66^V: Sin vero audire contempserit, bis aut ter atque testibus adhibitis monitus, ad Ecclesiae praefectos deferatur, a quibus item monebitur. Illos autem si spreverit, referant presbyteri negotium ad Christi plebem, et ex instituto Apostoli (nisi prius resipuerit) consentiente universa Ecclesia, excommunicetur.

agreement.¹⁵⁰

In addition to the evidence of Acts and I Corinthians, Martyr supports this last contention from church and secular history. First, he instances Rome under the Republic. Despite its recourse to dictatorship in emergencies, and its supervision by the virtuous aristocracy of the Senate, the most weighty matters of government were here referred to the people. Second, the example of the early church is decisive, though the examples he cites bear somewhat obliquely on the issue. Correspondence between Cyprian and Cornelius, he argues, shows that the forgiveness and restoration of a sinner requires the consent of the people to the case made by their leaders. Cyprian reported that he laboured a great deal with the people to secure their agreement to the reconciliation of 'the lapsed'. Martyr adds a comment by Augustine concerning the impossibility of obtaining popular consent to excommunication when immorality is widespread. These two instances suffice to demonstrate that excommunication and reconciliation in the early church required popular consent. Martyr concludes, 'therefore this right belongs to the church'.¹⁵¹

Papal abuse of excommunication provides further support for congregational discipline. It is not surprising that excommunication in the hands of the papacy proved tyrannical, since it is dangerous for it to be in the hands of one man. Even in time of crisis, the Roman Republic was more healthy when the tribunes and the people were involved than under its later imperial tyrants. Further, the pope is himself separated from both Christ and the true church on account of doctrinal heterodoxy: it is absurd for such a person to claim the right to excommunicate others. Moreover, sentence should be passed in the presence of the offender: Rome should not sit in judgment on those who are in England or Spain. Even a reformed papacy would not be the proper vehicle for this discipline, since it is an ordinance to be exercised locally.¹⁵² Martyr cites both

¹⁵⁰ *Cor*, 68^v: Sed quoniam in ecclesia de negotiis gravioribus et quae sunt maximi momenti, ad plebem refertur (ut patet in Actis Apostolicis) ideo politiae rationem habet. Maximi autem ponderis habentur excommunicatio, absolutio, ministrorum electio et alia huiusmodi. Unde concluditur: non absque consensu Ecclesiae quempiam excommunicari posse.

¹⁵¹ *Cor*, 68^r. Cyprian, *Ep.* 59.15; *CSEL* 3: 685; *ANCL* 8: 174-5. Augustine, *Contra ep. Parm.*, III.15, *PL* 43: 94.

¹⁵² *Cor*, 68^r: Ita cum excommunicatio ad unum pontificem est devoluta, saepe magno abusu videas eum, qui excommunicatus est, et a Christo et a vera Ecclesia praecisus, alios excommunicare: quod fieri nullo modo convenit. Nam qui iubet exulare, necessarium est ut ipse ius civitatis habeat. Quod vero pontifices Romani excommunicati sint et alieni ab ecclesia, satis docet epistola ad Galat. ubi dicitur: Si quis evangelizaverit secus atque nos, anathema esto. Ut autem illi secus doceant quam sacrae literae, tam evidens est, ut non egeat probatione.

Tertullian and Cyprian in support of this local exercise, though he does not distinguish between the congregational exercise of discipline described by the former and Cyprian's practice.¹⁵³

The scholion's advocacy of congregational consent is nevertheless balanced by Martyr's aristocratic principle. The congregationalism of the *Una semplice dichiarazione* has been modified by a new emphasis on the role of its elders. The consent of the church to excommunicate is understood as its agreement to the prior decision of its leaders. The definition at the beginning of *De excommunicatione* signals this: excommunication is made 'by the judgment of the leaders and with the consent of the whole church'.¹⁵⁴ The new balance is particularly apparent in Martyr's comments on I Corinthians 5.4. Sentence is in the hands of the people. However, in view of their inexperience they are directed by the prior judgment of the *maiores* of the church, the teaching presbyters and their lay counterparts. Responsibility for the ministry of warning, correcting and caring for Christ's flock is shared by this group.¹⁵⁵

Nonetheless, the involvement of the people is not notional. The right of the *plebs Christi* to give or withhold consent to the sentence of excommunication is absolute. Though Martyr now envisages the people responding to the recommendations of their leaders, their agreement cannot be coerced, and a passage towards the end of the scholion deals with the consequences of consent being withheld. In the event of such an impasse the matter is not closed. The minister should withhold the sacraments from the offender.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ *Ibid*; the reference to Tertullian is to *Apologeticus Adversum Gentes pro Christiani*, PL 1: 469; ET in Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, ed. J.E.B. Mayor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1917), 111-13.

¹⁵⁴ *Cor*, 66^{f-v}: Excommunicatio est facinorosi eiectio a fidelium societate, iudicio primorum atque tota Ecclesia consentiente, autoritate Christi at Scripturae sanctae regula ad salutem eius qui eiicitur, et populi Dei.

¹⁵⁵ *Cor*, 62^v: In iudicando praeit aliis, quod et maiores in Ecclesia facere decet, quo plebs imperitior eorum praecedente suffragatione dirigatur in iudicando. Habuit vetus Ecclesia ordinem presbyterii, cuius Apostolus meminit in Epistola ad Timotheum. Atque hi presbyteri vel seniores, duorum generum extiterunt. Nam quidam eorum et docebant et ministrabant sacramenta, imo una cum Episcopo Ecclesiam regebant: quia Episcopus eiusdem ordinis cum illis fuit, neque aliter se habebat erga eos, atque Romae consul ad senatores. Aliud genus presbyterorum graves et honestos viros ex laicis habuit, qui una cum aliis iam praedictis de Ecclesiasticis negotiis consultabant, et in admonendis, corrigendis, et curandis ovibus Christi suam operam impendebant.

¹⁵⁶ *Cor*, 69^f: Et cum interrogant: Quid est faciendum, si non successeirit, ut per sufragia plebis excommunicatio impetretur? Respondebo, saltem id curandum esse, ut damnatis atque convictis de publicis et manifestis criminibus pastor sacramenta non distribuat.

Further, where the congregation is reluctant to exercise this authority at all, the minister should seek to persuade them to restore the use of the sanction. The most opportune time to achieve this is when the church is in danger, for then the people are more prepared to accept healthy teaching.¹⁵⁷ The passage reflects Martyr's apprehension that implementing a functioning discipline on these principles would be opposed on practical as well as theological grounds, and that the objections would require answers drawn from church history as well as Scripture.

Martyr anticipates further obstacles to the exercise of excommunication. The risk of discipline provoking division, as feared by Augustine, attracts a lengthy refutation. Martyr argues that Scripture's specific command to exercise discipline takes priority over the desirability of avoiding schism.¹⁵⁸ The texts cited by Augustine and others are carefully examined: they do not justify such caution. If the flock of Christ is to be rightly fed, there can be no blind eye to vices.¹⁵⁹ The Arian controversy showed that the exercise of discipline takes priority over the avoidance of schism. Indeed, division and corruption are the consequence of failure to practise a proper discipline, not a pretext for leniency or delay. If the elders and leaders of the church had regularly brought those who should be excommunicated to the people for judgment, the whole church would not have been damaged.¹⁶⁰

Martyr also clearly distinguishes his prescription from the magisterial exercise of discipline. Since civil and ecclesiastical discipline are different, the existence of a Christian magistrate does not relieve the church of its responsibility. It is important not to confuse the two powers. There are differences both in the scope of offences with which they are concerned, and in the purposes of correction. The magistrate will tolerate some behaviour which the church cannot: adultery, drunkenness and slander in

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*: Atque interea loci omnibus modis et rationibus, ut restituatur huiusmodi censura, persuadere non desistat. Et erit (ut Augustinus inquit) opportunissimum tempus eam obtrudendi, cum Ecclesia calamitatibus affligitur.

¹⁵⁸ *Cor*, 68^v: Quando certum et singulare mandatum habemus, ad generalem imitationem Dei non est inde provocandum.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 69^r: Proinde videntur aliqui subvereri tumultus et turbas, quod suae tranquillitati consulant, sibi que fingant atque somnient quandam tranquillitatem et pacem in Ecclesia, quam impossibile est ut habeant, si recte gregem Christi pascere voluerint. Quoniam pacata et tranquilla non possunt habere omnia, nisi velint ad vitia connivere.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*: Deinde, cur non ab initio succrescentibus vitiis occurritur? Non est expectandum, ut morbus totum corpus pervadat. Nec alium de factum est, ut in ecclesia tam copiosa multitudo corrumpatur, nisi quod hanc disciplinam intermiserunt. Si presbyteri et maiores Ecclesiae non cessarent, sed perpetuo excommunicandos plebi proponerent, quos animadvertissent incorrigibiles, nequaquam sic fieri tota contaminaretur Ecclesia.

particular. Further, the civil power is not concerned with the malefactor's spiritual condition: once civil punishment has been exacted, an offender is free. The church's discipline, on the other hand, is not exhausted until it achieves its intended purpose of restoration. The magistrate's responsibility is to ensure that ministers fulfil their function, and will therefore include encouraging the use of excommunication.¹⁶¹ But the two jurisdictions are quite distinct.¹⁶²

Biblical exegesis, patristic learning, experience as a reformer of monastic morals and a lively contempt for traditional practice were Martyr's resources as he outlined his understanding in *De excommunicatione*. The detailed provision he makes for its exercise, and his careful answering of objections, are designed to substantiate his contention that it is necessary to the church's health. Excommunication is a pastoral function exercised by the church independently of the civil power. Its scope is all serious sin, including heretical belief. Its purpose is the church's purity and the salvation of the sinner. The gravity of the sanction requires the consent of the congregation for its exercise, as well as for the restoration of the repentant. The following section compares this conception of discipline with that of Martyr's contemporaries.

Summary: Martyr and discipline in context

Within a few years of coming to Protestant convictions, Martyr had adopted not only a three-mark doctrine of the church but also a distinctive view on the exercise of discipline. The breadth of his aspirations is striking. The third mark is assigned an ambitious role. It extends beyond cleansing the church and restoring the sinner, and intends to achieve the ordering of the whole life of believer and church, so that they conform to orthodox doctrine. Discipline is a divine command and also a power given to the church. It relates to the requirement of holy living, and is expressed especially

¹⁶¹ *Cor*, 62^r (on I Corinthians 5.2): Consequitur itaque graviter Ecclesias peccare, quae potestate hac sibi tradita non utantur, et magistratus qui obstant, cum iuvare et fovere hoc opus maxime debuerint.

¹⁶² *Cor*, 68^r: Sed isti noverint plurima esse vitia, ad quae leges civiles connivent, ut adulteria, ebrietates, maledicentia, et id genus, quae tamen ab Ecclesia ferri non possunt. Deinde magistratus punit saepius pecunia, certo exilio et carcere ad tempus, quibus poenis depensis, cives restituit, neque poenitentiam ullam requirit: Ecclesia vero minime potest nisi poenitentes reconciliare. Non itaque confundantur potestates. Alia esto civilis, alia esto ecclesiastica. Martyr repeats this vindication of discipline as a distinctively ecclesiastical function in his 1556 letter to Poland: LC 1111-2; *PML* 5: 147-8.

through brotherly correction and excommunication. As it is administered by ministers and people in accordance with Scripture, God maintains the purity and health of the church, enabling the restoration of the fallen believer. To fail to exercise discipline is to disobey God, as is the abuse of the sanction. Hence, a church without a functioning discipline is defective.

Martyr's inclusion of discipline as the third mark of the church, together with his distinctive emphases, raises the question of how his thought compares with that of his contemporaries. Our survey suggests that its affinities lie principally with the emerging Reformed tradition, particularly as represented by Martin Bucer and John Calvin. His approach, in other words, was oriented to Geneva rather than Zürich. But Martyr's ministry preceded Geneva's hegemony among the Reformed churches. His work is therefore properly seen as one of several voices from which the tradition emerged, rather than as aligned with or dependent on any single figure. To identify him too closely with a single strand of the emerging tradition is to mistake the nature of his times. As his preference for Zürich as a home in his final years suggests, ecclesiological differences were characteristic of a movement which had yet to achieve its enduring shape, and which was tolerant of a diversity of approaches to church government.

In contending for the centrality of discipline in the biblical conception of the church, Martyr clearly stands in the Swiss and South German Reformation tradition. Like many reformers with a humanist formation, Martyr accepts that the supervision of moral conduct is a church duty. However, unlike Zwingli and his followers, he does not identify church discipline with civic order. Its object, rather, is the purity of the church and the conformity of believers to the doctrinal and ethical norms of Scripture. The church's exercise of discipline, in *correctio fraterna* and excommunication, has a different object to the magistrate's interest in preserving order and promoting virtue. The church's sword is different from the punitive instrument of the civil power. Its purpose is to encourage genuine repentance for sin, and to accomplish the reconciliation which it enables, so restoring the purity of the church. It is thus with the approach of Oecolampadius rather than of Zwingli and Bullinger that Martyr's sympathies lie. Though the magistrate ensures it is in place, ecclesiastical discipline is autonomous. Martyr shows little enthusiasm for magisterial participation in the process, and this position also situates him close to Martin Bucer. Discipline is seen as the means of recovering the sinner and maintaining the health of the church.

Bucer's vision of the church where commitment to the common good is expressed in

mutual loving service, with its Lutheran overtones, is shared by Martyr, and this similarity is seen particularly in their enthusiasm for the informal exercise of brotherly correction and admonition. While Bucer's suggestion that discipline is a wider category than correction is less marked in Martyr, he nevertheless portrays it in the context of the mutual encouragement to obedience within the congregation. Further, when he comes to consider the formal exercise of discipline, Martyr shares the view of Bucer and Calvin, originally drawn from Oecolampadius, that this power is to be exercised collectively. Lay elders, who like Bucer and Calvin he identifies as a New Testament office, share in its administration with the church's ministers, forming a joint presbyterate.

It is at this point that Martyr, however, differs from both Bucer and Calvin. The representative role they assume for the lay elder does not concern him, since unlike them he advocates a direct role for the congregation in the exercise of discipline. Calvin, as we have seen, would interpret 'tell it to the church' as a reference to the church's eldership, while Bucer viewed the *Kirchenpfleger*, lay representatives and pastors of the *Christlichen Gemeinschaften* as authoritative. Martyr, on the other hand, consistently argued for the reservation of the power to excommunicate to the congregational assembly, acting under presbyteral guidance. This is the single most distinctive feature of his disciplinary thought. Its recommendation was scarcely incidental, being made when alternative proposals were already being tested. (The Genevan consistorial system, for example, was not endorsed in Martyr's writings, all of which are subsequent to its 1541 inauguration.) In this context, his 1551 enlistment of the threefold form of government theory in support of congregational involvement appears a deliberate attempt to publicise an alternative proposal.

In his understanding of excommunication itself, Martyr's approach is not unusual. The emphasis on the social exclusion of the offender is similar to that of Bucer and Calvin, though his references to sacramental exclusion are relatively uncommon, by comparison with other writers. The purity of the Lord's Table was less important to him as a symbol of the church's health than to some contemporaries. On the other hand, he is more ready to contemplate the regular use of excommunication than was Bucer, and in this is closer to Calvin. His approach to the scope of discipline is also similar to Calvin's: public discipline applies not only to serious open sin and heresy, but also to private sin which does not yield to brotherly admonition. He is markedly less sympathetic than Calvin to Augustine's argument that the unity and peace of the church are a consideration in deciding whether to exercise excommunication.

Martyr also diverges from Bucer and Calvin over the relationship between the church's sanction and divine action. Both Calvin and Bucer were reluctant to speculate on the connection: discipline related to the outward reputation of the church and the visible behaviour of the offender. Martyr, however, was explicit on excommunication as the ecclesiastical expression of the loss of *communio* between the sinner and God. This in turn is related to a further difference from Bucer. For Martyr, the expression of repentance was evidence of the restoration of spiritual communion, and qualified the excommunicate for readmission to the fellowship of the church. Bucer, on the other hand, was inclined to delay readmission until evidence of repentance in the form of works of penitence were observed. In this, Martyr is closer to Calvin, for whom the church's role as a place of forgiveness always had a high priority.¹⁶³

Such differences, however, are matters of nuance rather than substance. It is likely that Martyr's lack of pastoral responsibility meant that his views were not elaborated as extensively as those of his contemporaries. The tentative Lutheran approach, with its retention of aspects of penitential practice, and preference for the educational route as the means of shaping a Christian society, is far from Martyr's position. The dissimilarity of his approach to Zürich's is more surprising in view of his personal regard for Bullinger and his own ministry in the city: he would scarcely have recognised Zürich's system as church discipline at all. The affinities of his disciplinary thought clearly lie with Bucer and Calvin.

The maturity of Martyr's thought on the church is significant for the English context. The *Una semplice* was already published before his arrival; his lectures on I Corinthians, on which the commentary was based, were complete by 1551. As Peter Martyr encountered the Edwardian regime's endeavour to restore the true church, his doctrine of the marks, and its disciplinary component, was fully formed.

¹⁶³ McNeill (1942), 263-4; Yule, 597.

Chapter Five

'To found a church'

Introduction

Peter Martyr's arrival in England in 1547 was in marked contrast to his departure six years later. Both journeys took place under royal auspices, and with the strong encouragement of Thomas Cranmer. But the hopes which attended them, and the circumstances of travelling, were strikingly different. When Martyr set foot in England on 20 December 1547, it was as a royal invitee. No expense was spared in escorting him from Strasbourg, and after wintering with Cranmer at Lambeth Palace, in March 1548 he was installed as Oxford's Regius Professor of Divinity.¹ He thus began his English ministry as an honoured guest of the regime, well provided for, a favoured counsellor of Cranmer and his circle in their pursuit of church renewal.

The collapse of this programme following Edward VI's death on 6 July 1553 spelt an end to this prestige, and immediate peril. Placed under house arrest in Oxford, Martyr realised that his work in England was over and petitioned Queen Mary for permission to leave. In early September he was allowed to join Cranmer at Lambeth. Yet within a week his patron, who in their last meeting frankly advised Martyr to flee, was removed to the Tower. As a foreign guest, Martyr was spared such ignominy, instead receiving a safe conduct out of England. But there was to be no repeat of his 'all-expenses-paid' arrival. He made his return to Strasbourg alone, after a rather melodramatic effort to cover his tracks.²

For Martyr, the abrupt reversal of England's project of reform was both a catastrophe for the evangelical cause and an unsurprising confirmation of the perpetual struggle of the church 'under the cross'. His hopes for the reform had always been tempered by an vivid awareness of the strength of opposition. Early in his time in England, he

¹ Gorham, 38.

² Terenziano to John ab Ulmis, 20 Nov 1553, *ET*, 242-7, *OL* I, 369-72; Martyr to Bullinger, 3 Nov 1553, *ET*, 332-3, *OL* II, 505-6.

observed, 'I see there is nothing more difficult in the world than to found a church'.³ The records of his engagement with this enterprise illustrate the reality that, even where the evangelical cause enjoyed the strongest official backing, and aspired to create a 'Christian commonwealth', its character and self-image more often corresponded to the dominant portrayal of the true church in the popular literature of the day, as the 'poor little flock'.⁴

The purpose of this chapter and the next is not to chronicle Martyr's time in England during the reign of Edward VI.⁵ Rather, it is to assess his engagement with the reformation in England from the perspective of his ecclesiology. Chapter six will examine how far Martyr's doctrine of the church found expression in the project to renew ecclesiastical law: membership of the commission charged with preparing this corpus was his most extensive contribution to the official reformation. In the present chapter, the focus falls on the ecclesiological dimensions of his involvement with other aspects of the regime's religious policy. After an initial examination of his view of the condition of the church in England, an assessment of his contribution to the reform of

³ Martyr to Utenhoven, 15 January 1549: Nil difficilius in mundo esse video, quam Ecclesiam fundare. Lapides frequenter sunt rudes et admodum impoliti; unde nisi Spiritu, verbo et sanctae vitae exemplis reddantur plani et laeves, non possunt facile simul coalescere; Daniel Gerdes, *Scrinium Antiquarium sive Miscellanea Groningana* (Groningen: Spandaw and Rump, 1755) IV.II, 665-6; Gorham, 74, translates 'fundare' as 'found', but the original context suggests that Martyr has more than foundation-laying in mind: the reference is to the erection of the edifice.

⁴ For an extended examination of the images of the church and the process of reform presented in the many indigenous publications of the Edwardian period, see C.M.F. Davies, 'Towards a Godly Commonwealth: The public ideology of Protestantism, c 1546-1553' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1988), and, *idem*, ' "Poor persecuted little flock" or "commonwealth of Christians"; Edwardian Protestant concepts of the church', in *Protestantism and the National Church in Sixteenth Century England*, eds. P.G.Lake and M.C. Dowling (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 78-102.

⁵ The primary source for this remains Gordon Huelin, 'Peter Martyr and the English Reformation' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1955), especially chapters three and four. Huelin does not essay an inquiry into the extent of Martyr's influence, or analyse his writings during these years, but does provide the most ordered summary to date of his English sojourn. McLelland (1957), 17-44, gives a succinct account of this period. His introduction to *PML* 7: xvii-xlvi, updates this treatment. Anderson (1975), 85-160, 313-66 adds a wealth of detail including comments on many of Martyr's minor works and their connection with the process of reform in England. McNair (1980) is a selective account, focusing on the circumstances of Martyr's work in Oxford, especially leading up to the 1549 disputation. Overell (1984) also focuses on Oxford, arguing that Martyr's time in England was a failure: far from enjoying great influence, he was unpopular, lacked friends, and never attracted widespread support for his views. Marvin Anderson, 'Rhetoric and Reality: Peter Martyr and the English Reformation', *SCJ* 19 (1988), 451-69, responds. MacCulloch (2002) sets Martyr's work and thought in the context of Cranmer's programme, and makes a number of suggestions about his influence.

doctrine, sacraments and discipline is made. The chapter concludes by scrutinising how two particular incidents highlighted Martyr's attitude to the relationships between church and commonwealth, minister and magistrate.

The church of the English

Martyr was under no illusions over the nature of the task facing Edward VI's church leaders. If Cranmer was indeed 'an evangelical statesman who had no sense that he was anything other than an international leader of an international movement', in 1547 this was more a reflection of theological solidarity with his continental correspondents than the consequence of concrete achievement.⁶ He never relented from his aspiration to see the reformers of northern Europe united in one statement of faith and his motivation for inviting foreigners to England was not parochial.⁷ But the domestic task was daunting. Henry VIII's legacy was a church which, though detached from papal jurisdiction, had yet to find secure doctrinal, liturgical and legal moorings. When Martyr arrived, the project which faced Cranmer was barely begun.

Martyr's own works, despite their frequent mention of the issues facing the church generally and their acute awareness of opposition to reform, rarely refer directly to the English situation. It is in his letters and sermons that we encounter his close involvement with the reform process. His appreciation of the English situation can be summarised under three heads. First was the assumption, shared with his hosts as much as with his fellow exile scholars, that the task of reformation was a magisterial

⁶ MacCulloch (2002), 173

⁷ Eg, Cranmer to Laski, 4 July 1548, *OL* I, 17; *ET*, 11: 'We are desirous of setting forth in our churches the true doctrine of God, and have no wish to adapt it to all tastes, or to deal in ambiguities; but, laying aside all carnal considerations, to transmit to posterity a true and explicit form of doctrine agreeable to the rule of the sacred writings: so that there may not only be set forth among all nations an illustrious testimony respecting our doctrine, delivered by the grave authority of learned and godly men, but that all posterity may have a pattern to imitate. For the purpose of carrying this important design into execution, we have thought it necessary to have the assistance of learned men, who, having compared their opinions together with us, may do away with all doctrinal controversies, and build up an entire system of true doctrine'. See also Cranmer to Melancthon, 10 Feb 1549, *OL* I, 21-2; *ET*, 13-14. For the subordination of domestic reform to international considerations, see MacCulloch (1999), 87-92 (on the eucharist). On aspirations for a European doctrinal consensus and the consequent delays in producing the *Forty-Two Articles*, Calvin to Cranmer, June 1552, Gorham, 277; Charles Hardwick, *A History of the Articles of Religion* (2nd edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1859), 71-3; and MacCulloch (1996), 501-3.

one. Second, he shared the view that the Edwardian regime offered genuine hope for a church renewed on evangelical foundations. Finally, he lamented that efforts to reform liturgy, doctrinal standards and canon law were not matched by attention to other equally pressing needs.

Martyr's letters and sermons reveal his concurrence with the assumptions of the official reformation under Cranmer: that the church required renewal in its doctrine, liturgy and discipline, and that the proper authority for inaugurating and regulating this process was the civil power. Largely on account of the known Protestant sympathies of Cranmer and other church leaders, Edward's accession had been greeted with enthusiasm by the beleaguered continental protestants.⁸ However, Martyr's enthusiasm was soon tempered by sober realism over the scale of the task in England.

Writing to Bucer during the December 1548 parliament which saw the crucial Lords debate on the eucharist, Martyr urges his friend to join him in England 'in the same employment of cultivating this fallow ground'.⁹ The description is optimistic rather than pejorative. At the end of his first year in England, Martyr is aware of the strength of opposition to reform, which he normally describes as the work of 'the friends of popery'. Yet by comparison with the deteriorating situation in Strasbourg, England is a land of hope:

Up to this time this subject [religion] has been one of doubt and uncertainty; for many persons have been afraid, that by reason of the unhappy events in Germany this kingdom would be yet more tardy, and employ new delays in fully taking up the cause of religion. But now things are going on far otherwise, because diligent exertions are now making for this sole object, and there is generally entertained the best hope of success.¹⁰

It is the regime's readiness to embrace the evangelical programme which is critical in Martyr's recommendation to Bucer. The flock in Strasbourg is so beset with wolves, on account of God's judgment, that it is beyond Bucer's help. In England, a more promising population awaits his ministry.¹¹

⁸ McNair (1980), 89-90.

⁹ Martyr to Bucer, 26 Dec 1548, *OL* II, 473; *ET*, 312.

¹⁰ *OL* II, 468-9; *ET*, 309-10.

¹¹ *OL* II, 471-2; *ET*, 311.

The key to establishing true religion, for Martyr, is unsurprisingly a church order which ensures sound preaching, reforms public worship, and practises a biblical discipline. In common with most of his fellow reformers, Martyr looked to the magistrate to effect such reform. Although it is Cranmer whose initiative is the catalyst, Martyr is aware that the power to implement change rests with the regime as a whole, and in particular with the privy council acting through parliament.¹² In December 1548 he refers to parliament as 'the supreme council of the state, in which matters relating to religion are daily brought forward'.¹³ Martyr recognises the Henrician reality, that it was the civil power which governed the church, with the regime's programme normally implemented by parliamentary statute. Letters to continental friends contain frequent references to parliamentary sessions. Reporting Cranmer's energy to Bullinger early in 1550 he concludes:

And this circumstance gives us encouragement, that some addition is always being made to what we have already obtained; and we are in hopes that at the end of parliament, which is now sitting, some enactments will come out, which will in no small degree promote the reformation of the church.¹⁴

During the crisis which erupted in 1550 over John Hooper's resistance to the dress required for his consecration, Martyr observed to Bullinger that the vestments were part of the 1549 liturgical reforms which had been 'publicly received and confirmed by the authority of the kingdom'.¹⁵ He was also aware of the obstacles which the parliamentary process could involve, not least from the voluble presence of recalcitrant bishops in the House of Lords.¹⁶ He was in no doubt that parliament was an indispensable component of the civil power in England, a situation which his

¹² Martyr to Bullinger, 27 Jan 1550, *OL* II, 479-80; *ET*, 316; see also Calvin to Somerset, 22 Oct 1548, *CR* 41: 66-7; Gorham, 70-71: Calvin here stresses the authority which Somerset has from God and the responsibility he accordingly carries to ensure that bishops and curates fulfil their duty.

¹³ *OL* II, 469; *ET*, 310.

¹⁴ *OL* II, 480; *ET*, 316. See also Martyr to Bullinger, 8 Mar 1552, *OL* II, 503; *ET*, 330-31.

¹⁵ Martyr to Bullinger, 28 Jan 1551, *OL* II, 487; *ET*, 321.

¹⁶ Cf the frequent references in his correspondence to the political opposition to reform, eg, Martyr to Bucer 22 Jan 1549, *OL* II, 477; *ET*, 314: 'You must know that many things have been determined in our parliament respecting religion, but with such obstinate opposition from certain bishops, as no one ever expected would be the case.' Cf also *OL* II, 469-70; *ET*, 310.

predilection for the Aristotelian model predisposed him to recognise.¹⁷

Martyr was also acutely aware of the role of the king and privy council. Fulsome in his praise of Edward VI's own piety and zeal for reform, he both hints that the king's minority has been an impediment and was conscious of the decisive role which the king had an increasing capacity to play.¹⁸ John ab Ulmis cites Martyr as his source for the account of the adolescent king's peremptory striking out the invocation of the saints in the Edwardian Ordinal's oath of supremacy.¹⁹ Shortly afterwards, writing from Lambeth on the proposed changes to the *Prayer Book*, Martyr reported Sir John Cheke's comment that if parliament does not make the necessary changes, 'the King himself will do this; and that when parliament meets, he will interpose his royal authority'.²⁰

Martyr thus accepted that the fortunes of reform depended on propitious political conditions. This corresponds to his conception of the relation of minister and magistrate, in which the former instructs the civil power in its duty, while the latter ensures that true religion flourishes. A published letter to Somerset, following his release from prison early in 1550, reflects this assumption. Somerset's former responsibility was 'the chief ordering of matters' and 'the ordering of the common weal', including the restoration of religion.²¹ His afflictions are attributed to diabolical opposition:

¹⁷ Aristotle's analysis had wide currency in the sixteenth century: in English political discourse it occurs, for example, prominently in the opening chapters of Sir Thomas Smith's *De Republica Anglorum*, written in the 1560s though not published until 1583. Smith was a Secretary of State under Edward VI, having trained as a civil lawyer in Padua as well as Cambridge, and was also a member of the commission for the reform of canon law. His analysis of the nature of political power in England has a preference for a mixed form of government. It was to stress the role of the Prince as the head and authority of all things done in England, but to see the 'power of the realm' as most evident when the king is present in parliament. Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum*, ed. L. Alston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1906), xxxi-xxxv, 46.

¹⁸ Martyr to Bullinger, 1 June 1550, *OL* II, 482; *ET*, 318: 'we derive no little comfort from having a king who is truly holy, and who is inflamed with so much zeal for godliness. He is endued with so much erudition for his age, and already expresses himself with so much prudence and gravity, as to fill all his hearers with admiration and astonishment.' Martyr to Gualter, 1 June 1550, *OL* II, 485; *ET*, 320: 'The tender age, too, of our Josiah is no slight hindrance to the business'.

¹⁹ John ab Ulmis to Bullinger, 22 Aug 1550, *OL* II, 415-16; *ET*, 274.

²⁰ Martyr to Bucer, 10 Jan 1551, Gorham, 227.

²¹ Martyr, *An epistle unto the right honorable and christian Prince, the Duke of Somerset*, tr., Thomas Norton, (London: Walter Lynne, 1550), Bv^v, Ci^v.

You (right excellent lord) have sore hurt the devil which is both a snake and a scorpion, and ruler of the darkness of this world, wherefore what marvel you if he labour to destroy you? [. . .] He sore suspects that he shall not be able to fray the people of Christ from the gospel, unless he rage against you, by whom superstition is marvellously broken, by whom the light of godliness has generally shone upon this realm.²²

Martyr's praise is related to his desire to comfort or flatter Somerset. Yet he accurately reflected the political situation under the duke's Protectorship: without the council's support, Cranmer's initiatives could have borne little fruit.

In fact, the church under Edward VI was on its way to merging with the state. Bishops were appointed by letters patent rather than *congé d'élire*. Ecclesiastical courts functioned in the name of the king. Dioceses were visited by royal commissions. Most church law was made by parliamentary statute and not through the convocations. Indeed, convocations had lost a good deal of their autonomy: their enactments required parliamentary approval to attain statutory force, for example. Above all, the detail of the reform of religion was taken in hand by the king and his privy council, in close co-operation with Cranmer and his circle, where the initiatives normally originated.²³ The ecclesiology of the reformers, exemplified by Martyr, posed few obstacles to this development. Rather, it expected the magistrate to assume these responsibilities, and had yet to articulate limits to the authority of the civil power over religion. However, Cranmer's own ecclesiology needed no encouragement from Martyr to embrace the Tudor reality. As far as order was concerned, his thought already effectively subjugated the church to the prince. In practice this tutelage even extended to the determination of doctrinal standards.²⁴ If Martyr's writings did not envisage this, there is no indication that he challenged the assumption as it found expression in Cranmer's England.

How did Martyr assess the English situation? His correspondence is our principal source, and the letters which survive are mainly to Bucer and Bullinger. Their correspondence assumes shared ecclesiological priorities and, though he approves of

²² *Ibid*, Bv^r.

²³ David Loades, *Tudor Government: Structures of Authority in the Sixteenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), esp c.5; *idem*, *The Oxford Martyrs* (London: Batsford, 1970), 48-100; Noel Jones, 'Known from their works: living and writing early modern English religious history', in *Belief and Practice in Reformation England: A Tribute to Patrick Collinson from his Students*, eds. S. Wabuda and C. Litzenberger (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 1-19.

²⁴ G.W. Bromiley, *Thomas Cranmer Theologian* (London: Lutterworth, 1956), 50-6.

the direction of change, Martyr is frank over its shortcomings. In particular, once Bucer has arrived in England, their correspondence reveals the *lacunae* they perceive in the government's programme, as well as their experience of opposition in the universities. Bucer's death early in 1551 terminated this revealing correspondence, depriving the historian of the relatively unguarded comments which their long partnership and similar positions in England enabled them to share in 1549-51. The letters to Bullinger, whom Martyr admired but had met only briefly, are more by way of reports: they tend to generalise about the obstacles facing the reformers, except where Bullinger has detailed knowledge of the issues.

However, Martyr's most comprehensive single account of the situation of the English church rather surprisingly arises in a letter to Count Otto Heinrich, of the Palatinate. Written towards the end of 1551 and apparently occasioned by the Lutheran ruler's interest in England, it catalogues the achievements of the previous three years. Unlike the correspondence with Bucer and Zürich, it assumes little prior knowledge of the English situation and accordingly gives a more comprehensive, if deliberately studied, account than the running commentary of his other letters.²⁵

Prominent in Martyr's general approbation of England's church is the reform of the Lord's Supper. In December 1548, he reports that owing to Cranmer's contribution to the Lord's debate, 'transubstantiation, I think, is now exploded, and the difficulty regarding the presence is at this time the most prominent point of dispute'. Yet, 'with respect to a change of religion, they can no longer retrace their steps' owing to the 'great innovations' that have taken place everywhere, a reference *inter alia* to the 1547 abolition of chantries.²⁶ By November 1551, he is able to report not only the ending of private masses and destruction of altars, but also their replacement by the 'one supper of the Lord' commemorated in English around a table.²⁷ He was also happy that further liturgical reform was underway. In exchanges with Bucer, Martyr anticipated the adoption of many of their recommendations, though the degree of simplicity they both hope for had only the slender support of Cheke.²⁸ In 1552, while the question over whether grace is conferred in the sacraments is not settled, and has held up some

²⁵ Martyr's letters to Bucer and Bullinger during his time in England are mostly translated in Gorham and *OL II*; additional material is found in BL Add MS 19400, fol. 20, BL Add MS 28571 fols. 23-26, and Constantin Hopf, *Martin Bucer and the English Reformation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), 162-64. The letter to Count Otto is translated in Huelin, 84-87, with the original Latin printed in Appendix 1; Huelin's translation is not altogether reliable.

²⁶ Martyr to Bucer, 26 Dec 1548, *OL II*, 470; *ET*, 310.

²⁷ Huelin, 85.

²⁸ Martyr to Bucer, 10 Jan 1551 and Feb 1551, Gorham, 227-9, 232.

further reform (as we shall see, this is probably a reference to the canon law commission) he nevertheless reports triumphantly to Bullinger that 'the Book or Order of Ecclesiastical Rites and Administration of the Sacraments is reformed, for all things are removed from it which could nourish superstition'.²⁹

Similar emphases are found in the letter to Count Otto Heinrich. Martyr is eager to portray the reform of the English church in the best light. The focus falls on changes already made. Martyr particularly draws attention to the reform of the church's ministry. He comments specifically that 'of the sacred orders only three are preserved . . . since the other degrees which were at other times in use are not contained in Holy Scripture'. Clerical marriage is allowed and auricular confession is a matter of liberty, not compulsion. The doctrine of purgatory and the invocation of the saints have been removed. He passes no comment on the retention of anointing of ministers and of the sick, approves of the laying on of hands in ordination, and observes that it is by civil decree, not church law, that the eating of flesh is prohibited on customary days. His reservations are muted: a 'purer and simpler practice of the Lord's Supper is to be desired' and the ministerial vesture ought to be simpler, owing to the fact that 'the superstition of the mass is considerably cherished in the popular mind'.³⁰

Liturgical reform represented for Martyr the most satisfying achievement of the regime: he finds less to commend in the restoration of doctrine and preaching. There is a hint of defensiveness in his remarks to Count Otto Heinrich. On the cardinal doctrine, Martyr is able to report that in 'justification through faith in Jesus Christ alone, we have the pure doctrine'.³¹ This was central to England's identification with the continental Reformation: Bucer's 1548 *Gratulation* of Cranmer's achievement in the *Book of Homilies*, precisely on this point, had exemplified its symbolic importance.³² However, Martyr's enthusiasm for England's allegiance to solifidianism disguised his inability to report further doctrinal progress beyond the enforcement of the *Homilies*. Until the publication of the *Forty-Two Articles* in 1553, England lacked an agreed doctrinal statement. The *Homilies*, he hinted to Count Otto, are a temporary expedient. By their use 'the people

²⁹ Martyr to Bullinger, 14 Jun 1552, Gorham, 281.

³⁰ Huelin, 85-7.

³¹ *Ibid*, 85.

³² Bucer, *The Gratulation of the mooste famous clerke M Martin Bucer . . . unto the church of Englande for the restitution of Christes religion* (London: Richard Jugge, 1548), Aiv^v - Av^v; *Certayne Sermons, or Homelies, appoynted by the kynges Maiestie to be declared and redde by all persons, Vicars, or Curates, every Sondaie in their churches, where they have Cure* (London: R Grafton, 1547).

may be taught skilfully and profitably about the highest and principal points of religion'. Their provision, however, stems from the lack of suitable preachers for every church.³³

The dearth of evangelical ministers is a recurrent complaint. Like Bucer, he laments the myopia of a regime which fails to complement the reform of ritual and the uprooting of superstition with the production of suitable ministers, observing in 1550:

There is no lack of preachers in London, but throughout the whole country they are very rare: wherefore every godly person mourns over and deplores this great calamity of the church. The sheep of the divine pasture, the sheep of God's hand, the sheep redeemed by the blood of Christ, are defrauded of their proper nourishment of the divine word: and unless the people be taught, the change of religion will certainly avail them but little.³⁴

This defect attracts particularly sharp comment in sermons surviving from Martyr's time in England. Most were delivered in Oxford, where the prevailing theological consensus was hostile to reform.³⁵ In a sermon for Good Friday he laments: 'The tongue

³³ Huelin's translation, 'And since there is not yet that fulness of declarations that they may be held always in any church whatsoever', is misleading here. The Latin, printed in his Appendix 1, refers to the scarcity of suitable preachers: 'Et quoniam concionatorum adhuc non est copia, ut in quavis ecclesia semper haberi possint, qui ad munus concionandi sint idonei dominicis diebus, priusquam fidei symbolum cantetur, quod fit ante sacra mysteria, clara voce leguntur, quaedam homiliae'.

³⁴ Martyr to Rodolph Gualter, 1 June 1550, *OL* II, 485; *ET*, 319; see also Martyr to Bullinger of the same date, *OL* II, 482; *ET*, 317; for Bucer's concerns for the lack of preachers, see, eg, Bucer to Brenz, 15 May 1550, *OL* II, 543, *ET*, 354, lamenting the fact that the reformation of the church by 'ordinances, which the majority obey very grudgingly' is not accompanied by the provision of preachers; in Bucer to Calvin, Whitsunday 1551, *OL* II, 545-8, *ET*, 356-8, he develops this critique, lamenting the 'procrastinating' by bishops and secular rulers over the reform of the church and especially the supply of preachers, and lamenting the continued spoliation of the church's wealth by the nobility.

³⁵ Martyr to Bucer, 10 June 1550, Gorham, 152: 'For among you, I hear, are several Heads of Colleges who favour religion; while we are miserably destitute of that advantage. Nor are the statutes of the Visitors observed here with greater respect than they are kept by your people. In short, the minds of the Seniors are every day more and more hardened; while the Juniors, of whom one might have some hope, are called off, by a thousand artifices, to prevent them from having an opportunity of hearing'. On foreign students in Oxford, Claire Cross, 'Continental Students and the Protestant Reformation in England in the Sixteenth Century', in *Reform and Reformation: England and the Continent c1500-c1750*, ed. D. Baker (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979), 35-57. On Oxford in general during Edward's reign, C.M. Dent, *Protestant Reformers in Elizabethan Oxford* (Oxford, 1983), 4-16. Martyr's most complete account of the low state of true religion in the city is found in his sermon on the second chapter on Malachi, *LC* 1037; *PML* 5: 304-5.

of Christ dries up like a potsherd because few preach his pure gospel, and the truth is not taught'. The clergy live for their own glory, and work for the rewards of this world. Instead of sharing the sufferings of Christ, they actually add to them. Elsewhere, the meagre provision for ministers is actually cited as a reason for their paucity: preaching on Haggai 1, he observes that men are no longer coming forward for the ministry, on account of the lack of rewards. The same analysis occurs in an exposition of Malachi 2, dating from his final months in Oxford: many draw back from the ministry on account of the lack of reward and respect 'in today's conditions'.³⁶

The establishment of the 'stranger' churches highlighted the regime's reluctance to provide for a national evangelical ministry. In 1549, Martyr commends these semi-autonomous churches for establishing both congregations and preaching. He longs for God to grant 'a just increase of these blessings'.³⁷ He makes a related point to Bucer when urging him in the same year to come to England, quoting Matthew 9.38 on the abundance of the harvest and scarcity of labourers. He is particularly aware of the lack of theologians and learned ministers, and critical of the 'coldness' of many who profess attachment to the true religion.³⁸ The situation was little better in 1550: in view of the 'penury of the word of God' in England, Martyr recommended an unnamed lay correspondent, presumably a noble, to compensate by his own study and the good government of his household.³⁹ In the same year, in the midst of their involvement with *Prayer Book* reform, he confides in Bucer:

But this is a matter of the deepest concern - that while they are occupied with those subjects of small importance, those things in the Church, which ought to be considered as the prow and the stern, remain neglected! For, as to establishing order in parishes, and [taking care] that doctrine and discipline may be ministered everywhere among the people - not a syllable! For my own part, I expect little fruit; because I cannot perceive, in any other way, among those who ought to govern the Church, any interchange of counsels or deliberations.⁴⁰

Such sentiments found a counterpart in the frustrations Martyr experienced personally in Oxford. In 1550 he complained that his professorial position required him to indicate his support for admission to degrees of candidates whose opinions were openly 'papistical'. His discomfort with such ambiguities is patent, though he

³⁶ LC 1043, PML 5: 246; CP 20, PML 5: 265; LC 1035, PML 5: 300.

³⁷ Martyr to Utenhoven, 15 Jan 1549, Gorham, 74.

³⁸ Martyr to Bucer, 26 Dec 1548, OL II, 472; ET, 311-12.

³⁹ Martyr to a friend in England, 1 July 1550, Gorham, 161.

⁴⁰ Martyr to Bucer, early February 1551, Gorham, 232.

comments rather disarmingly that he sought to avoid offending conscience by publicising his own view of a candidate's heretical doctrine.⁴¹

Martyr's concern over the want of zeal among many professed reformers is accompanied by a critique of their inattention to discipline. In common with a growing chorus during Edward's reign, Martyr is alarmed by the phenomenon of a nation whose religion is reformed in name, but where the increase of immorality is more obvious than the growth of godliness. The cause for this, he argued, was the failure on the part of both state and church to exercise their respective disciplinary functions, and the remedy was to make good this lack. Official unwillingness to address such problems frequently attracts Martyr's comment, though he rarely dwells on it at length. In 1548, he observed that those who favour reform 'are either not engaged in the sacred office, or are so cold altogether to shrink from the endurance of any labours or perils'.⁴² Two years later, his criticism of the authorities is sharper. Slow progress in reform is due to the 'worldly prudence' of 'some parties who think it quite right that religion should be purified, but are willing to make as few alterations as possible'. Reasons of state stand in the way of more energetic reform.⁴³ Shortly before Bucer's death, he is similarly pessimistic over the willingness of 'those who ought to govern the church' to erect an order throughout the church which will provide for both preaching and discipline.⁴⁴ In the Haggai sermon, Martyr associates this lassitude with England's general failure on the part of England to seize the opportunity for reform which has arisen in the country:

There was never so much light from the Apostles' time as there is today. [. . .] The magistrates pretend a great goodwill towards this [. . .] All these advantages are neglected and despised, and the house of God lies flattened.⁴⁵

Alarm over the moral condition of England became a frequent theme, and was increasingly associated with halfheartedness in reforming the church. The failure of the supporters of change to match behaviour to belief particularly concerns him. In January 1549, Martyr had been so shaken by the disgrace of the Protector's brother, Thomas Seymour, 'a man who was in other respects a great friend to religion', that he attributed

⁴¹ Martyr to Bucer, 6 Sep 1550, Gorham, 178.

⁴² *OL* II, 472; *ET*, 311-12.

⁴³ Martyr to Bullinger, 1 Jun 1550, *OL* II, 482; *ET*, 317-18.

⁴⁴ Martyr to Bucer Feb 1551, Gorham, 232; the original reads: Ego quod ad me attinet parum spero fructum, quoad non viderim alia via, apud eos qui ecclesiam regere debent consilia et deliberationes communicari. BL Add MS 28571, fol 47^v.

⁴⁵ *CP* 15; *PML* 5: 256.

his alleged treason to satanic opposition to the gospel.⁴⁶ In the summer of 1550, surprised by the recent progress made by the reformers, he comments that this is 'far more than our sins deserve', since among the obstacles to the progress of religion are 'the gross vices of those who profess the gospel'.⁴⁷ In January 1551, alluding to evangelical divisions both over the Hooper crisis and among the leaders of the stranger churches, he concludes 'our sins, and the very slender fruit of the gospel, alarm me'.⁴⁸ The following month he was lamenting 'the miserable condition of the church'. This arose not only from the 'persecutions of Antichrist' but also from the fact it is 'so easily shaken by the offences of her own'.⁴⁹ Consoling Bucer's widow in March 1551, he again despairs over evangelical hypocrisy: 'How much I fear for us wretches, who prattle about Christ and the gospel while we meantime live out pure and unadulterated ungodliness'.⁵⁰

Martyr often connects the prevalence of sin and disorder with national failure to embrace true religion with the necessary zeal, and sees it as divine judgment. In his sermon on Haggai 1, Oxford's neglect of its duty to build up the church is laid at the door of ministers, people and magistrates: 'they have all sinned very seriously'. The refusal of ministers to preach is matched by the complacency of the people about the dearth of the word: all are guilty of the 'sin of negligence'.⁵¹ God will not let such neglect go unpunished. A recent poor harvest, and the growing incidence of disease, are identified as the opening episodes of divine judgment on a nation which is refusing the gospel: 'God's weapons to avenge the insult done to him and our negligence of divine things are painful. [. . .] O the unhappy and miserable condition of those who have made God their enemy'.⁵² Progressing from the failure of crops through the loss of livestock to the destruction of men by a general plague, God's wrath grows gradually, in order to allow time for repentance.⁵³ Nevertheless, Martyr's analysis is that the dawning of the evangelical faith in England has brought peril as well as promise. Profession without wholehearted obedience incurs the wrath of God. An epidemic of 'sweating sickness' in 1551 was a warning not to treat the gospel in a 'light and perfunctory manner'. Safety is not assured until 'having cast away all else, we cling

⁴⁶ Martyr to Bucer, 22 Jan 1549, *OL* II, 477; *ET*, 314.

⁴⁷ Martyr to Bullinger, 1 Jun 1550, *OL* II, 482; *ET*, 317.

⁴⁸ Martyr to Bucer, 10 Jan 1551, Gorham, 230.

⁴⁹ Martyr to Bucer, Feb 1551, Gorham, 233.

⁵⁰ Martyr to Bucer's widow, March 1551, *LC* 1090; *PML* 5: 119.

⁵¹ *CP* 23; *PML* 5: 272.

⁵² *CP* 17; *PML* 5: 260-1.

⁵³ *CP* 17-18; *PML* 5: 262.

solely and entirely to Christ, and him crucified'.⁵⁴

We shall see how this moral critique also arises in Martyr's reaction to the 1549 rebellions. He viewed the risings as symptomatic of a nation which had in practice rejected the gospel, and was accordingly under the judgment of God.⁵⁵ Hunger for material wealth in particular reflected a society where both rulers and ruled were in thrall to Satan rather than God. Martyr was apprehensive that social turmoil in turn threatened religious reform. In a letter to Bullinger in the aftermath of the 'stirs', he yearns that God would grant 'quiet times; for whatever tumult, or disturbance, or sedition breaks forth in this country is altogether, both by the enemy and the people at large, imputed to the reviving gospel'.⁵⁶

In his dismay at the gulf between belief and conduct, Martyr was not unusual. Expectations of the potential of evangelical preaching to transform the social order as well as to reform the behaviour of individuals had been high, and disappointment with an ambiguous outcome was correspondingly widespread. Popular vernacular literature shared the view that the 1549 rebellions had extinguished optimism about the rapid acceptance of the gospel in England. Catherine Davies has described the 'siege mentality' of Edwardian Protestantism, and this is the context for Martyr's comments. Far from embracing the gospel, England appeared to many to be rejecting it: the people by open resistance, the ruling class by hypocritically upholding it while in fact furthering their own interests.⁵⁷ In particular, ambition and greed among the ruling class were frequent targets of criticism. Thomas Seymour's conduct had been notoriously lambasted by Latimer in a sermon before the king, and Martyr's 1549 comments on noble covetousness had indigenous counterparts in the criticisms made, for example by Anthony Gilby and Bernard Gilpin, of the oppression of the weak by the powerful, and the inversion of divine order this represented. The destructive effect of greed, as a denial of the gospel virtue of charity and the corrosive of social cohesion, was a common lament. The diversion of the church's wealth into lay hands was a further source of criticism, and the failure of the newly-enriched laity adequately to provide for

⁵⁴ Martyr to Bullinger, 6 Aug 1551, *OL* II, 496-7; *ET*, 326-7: 'the more ripe knowledge of divine things frequently calls down a severer punishment'.

⁵⁵ The most extensive examination of these unpublished sermons, together with a further memorandum by Martyr, is in Valdo Vinay, 'Riformatori e lotte contadine. Scritti e polemiche relative alla ribellione dei contadini nella Cornovaglia e nel Devonshire sotto Edoardo VI', *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 3 (1967), 203-51.

⁵⁶ Martyr to Bullinger, 27 Jan 1551, *OL* II, 480; *ET*, 316.

⁵⁷ Davies (1988), 156-63, 345-6, 365-6.

gospel ministry was a particular complaint.⁵⁸ Martyr's plea for a renewal of zeal among the rulers, of which the Oxford sermon on Haggai 1 is the most complete surviving example, was one which was often heard in the sermons and pamphlets which oscillated between hope and fearfulness, becoming less optimistic during the reign.⁵⁹

A pointed aspect of Martyr's analysis was thus his critique of the lack of discipline in England. The 1549 uprisings, as we shall see, were attributed in part to the 'indulgence' of the authorities, ecclesiastical and lay, in tolerating vice and disorder.⁶⁰ His concern over the neglect of discipline was shared with Bucer, whose *De Regno Christi* deals with the subject at some length.⁶¹ In his last letter to Bucer, Martyr alluded to the lack of discipline in the parishes, and the failure of the authorities to redress this.⁶² The sermon on Haggai 1 also refers to the necessity of enforcing clerical discipline to ensure that the gospel is preached: absentees should be returned to their parishes and limits placed on worldly indulgence. Indeed, discipline in the whole congregation, whose administration alongside doctrine by the ministers of the church was the norm 'in ancient times', has been allowed to lapse.⁶³

Martyr's comments on discipline are therefore parallel to his remarks on the condition of preaching. While he applauded England's liturgical reforms, and was convinced of Cranmer's good intentions, he was frustrated by the regime's apparent reluctance urgently to see that the marks were effectively exercised. England was firmly on the road of reform, but its gait was awkward and progress accordingly slow.

⁵⁸ Davies (1988), 191-7, 358-62; MacCulloch (1996), 408; on Gilpin and Martyr, Huelin, 56; on Gilpin's 1552 court sermon on the abuse of patronage, Strype, *Ecc Mem*, II, 369-71.

⁵⁹ Davies (1988), 373-80; an example is John Proctor, *The Fal of the late Arrian* (London: William Powell, 1549). Proctor's purpose was to explain the rise of anabaptist heresy as the consequence of England's failure to follow the gospel, and like Martyr, he was alarmed at the divergence of faith and conduct: 'we have the Scriptures, but the Scriptures have not us'; *ibid*, BiV.

⁶⁰ Vinay, 234-5; CCCC MS 340.75; Cranmer was to make this point the opening section of his sermon at St Paul's on 21 July 1549 against the rebels, drawing directly on Martyr's drafting; Cox II, 191.

⁶¹ Bucer, *De Regno Christi*, in *Melanchthon and Bucer*, LCC 19 (1969), 240-8.

⁶² Martyr to Bucer, Feb 1551, Gorham, 232.

⁶³ CP 15, 20; PML 5: 257, 267.

Martyr and the marks of the English church

Preliminary

This section analyses Martyr's engagement with the reform of the church under Edward VI; the next will examine his involvement with two crises encountered in its implementation.

We have seen that Martyr's concern was for more than the restoration of the church's institutional framework. Nevertheless, his situation in Oxford and the close relationship he enjoyed with Cranmer, together with his complete want of English, meant that it was over the official reformation that his influence primarily lay. His correspondence confirms his close interest in the reform of the church's liturgy, doctrine and canon law. From his arrival in England, he was intimately engaged with the endeavour to reform eucharistic doctrine and practice. He was consulted, alongside Bucer, on alterations to the *Prayer Book*. This resulted in the introduction of a communion order whose theological affinities lay most clearly with the emerging compromise represented by the 1549 *Consensus Tigurinus* between Zürich and Geneva. We know rather less of his engagement with the formation of England's confessional standard, the *Forty-Two Articles* of 1553. Indeed, Martyr's closest and best documented involvement with the formal reconstruction of the English church was his active membership of the commission for the reform of canon law, to be examined in chapter six.

Despite his enlistment at Cranmer's side, and their evident close personal friendship, Martyr's own ecclesiological distinctives cannot be said to have exercised a dominant influence over the shaping of the English church in this formative period. Though his later correspondence indicates approval of Cranmer's achievement, and its general coincidence with his own views, the formal instruments of reform in England - the 1552 *Prayer Book* and the 1553 *Articles* - bear few traces of his distinctive ecclesiological emphases, particularly over the vexed question of discipline. Cranmer was astute in enlisting his friend's support where this was helpful, but Martyr was never more than a consultant to the archbishop, and exercised no decisive influence over the direction of his master's pen.

Doctrine

The portrayal of the *Forty-Two Articles*, *Prayer Book* and *Reformatio* as a carefully orchestrated three-mark reform programme for the English church is belied by the historical reality.⁶⁴ In the first place, Cranmer's ambitions were wider than England's church polity, which had particular consequences for the articulation of her theological position. In particular, the provision of a domestic doctrinal standard, the *Forty-Two Articles*, was always secondary to Cranmer's desire to lead the way in forging a confessional statement which would unite the Protestants of northern Europe in a riposte to Trent. It was only in mid-1552, when it became clear that these hopes, never shared so blithely by his continental correspondents, were unlikely to be realised, that the preparation of the domestic *Articles* acquired real impetus. They were finally published in June 1553, when the king evidently had but weeks to live.⁶⁵

The history of their production is also unusually obscure, though the process in 1552-3 did have antecedents.⁶⁶ In 1549, Cranmer was reported to be requiring subscription to his own 'articles of religion' as a precondition for granting licences to preach. These have not survived.⁶⁷ Bishop Hooper of Gloucester employed a similar procedure in his diocese in 1551. His own account suggests that he used articles of his own devising, though there are similarities with the *Forty-Two Articles*, perhaps indicating a common source, now lost.⁶⁸ The *Articles* themselves are most evidently indebted to the 1530 *Augsburg Confession* and the little known 1536 *Wittenberg Articles*, mediated in part

⁶⁴ This characterisation is seen, for example, in James C. Spalding, 'The Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum of 1552 and the Furthering of Discipline in England', *CH* 39 (1970), 168.

⁶⁵ For Cranmer's ambitions for a general reformed confession of faith and a protestant council to reply to Trent, Cranmer to Melanchthon, 10 Feb 1549, *OL* I, 21-22; *ET*, 13-14; Cranmer to Calvin, 20 Mar 1552, *OL* I, 24-25; *ET*, 16; Cranmer to Melanchthon, 27 Mar 1552, *OL* II, 25-26; *ET*, 16-17; Calvin to Cranmer, April 1552, *CR* 42: 312-14; *OL* II, 711-713; Calvin to Cranmer, June 1552, Gorham, 277; MacCulloch (1996), 213; B.J. Kidd, *The Thirty-Nine Articles: Their History and Explanation* (London: Rivingtons, 1899), 29.

⁶⁶ MacCulloch (1996), 503-4, 524-5, 536-8.

⁶⁷ Hooper to Bullinger, 7 Nov 1549, *OL* II, 69-70; *ET*, 44-5.

⁶⁸ John Hooper, *Later Writings*, ed. Charles Nevinson, (Cambridge: Parker Society, 1852), 119. Hardwick (1859), 77-81, argues that the coincidence of wording between Hooper's articles and the *Forty-Two Articles* indicates a common source for a number of them.

through Cranmer's *Thirteen Articles* of 1538.⁶⁹

The history of the 1553 document began with a request to Cranmer from the king and privy council in the summer of 1551 to frame a book of articles 'for the preserving and maintaining peace and unity of doctrine in this church'.⁷⁰ Evidence of Martyr's involvement in the drafting process is slight.⁷¹ Contemporary records bear no trace of his hand in the revision, and his own correspondence is almost as unyielding. An earlier reference to his interest in doctrinal statements is tantalisingly obscure. In 1550 John ab Ulmis told Bullinger that Martyr and Utenhoven had commissioned him to prepare a translation into Latin of the 'confession of the church at Strasbourg' for Cranmer, and had accompanied Martyr to Lambeth when he presented it.⁷² No other reference to this incident exists and the identity of the document is not known. It is unlikely to have been the comprehensive *Tetrapolitan Confession*, already extant in Latin, and the same consideration applies to the much shorter *Summa doctrinae ministrorum Ecclesiae Argentinensis* of the 1539 Strasbourg synod, which principally dealt with eucharistic doctrine.⁷³ Martyr's own surviving letters, while mentioning his role in the reform of canon law, are as silent on this exercise as they are over the *Forty-Two Articles* themselves.

The silence of the record is scarcely conclusive evidence against Martyr's involvement, since, apart from references in the privy council records of May 1552 to the passage of drafts between Cranmer, the bishops, Cheke, Cecil, and the king's chaplains, it is

⁶⁹ The 'Notes and Illustrations' appendix to the second edition of Hardwick (1859), 371-99, remains the most complete analysis of the documentary sources of the *Articles of Religion* in their successive editions; see also Schaff (1877), I, 603-48. The text of the *Forty-Two Articles*, in Latin and English, together with those of the Henrician compositions, indicating their derivation from *Augsburg*, is most conveniently found in Gerald Bray, *Documents of the English Reformation* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1994), 119-61, 184-221, 284-311. See also J.C. de Satge, 'The Composition of the Articles', in *The Articles of the Church of England*, ed. J.C. Satge *et al.* (London: Mowbray, 1964), 1-24.

⁷⁰ Hardwick (1859), 73, quoting Strype, *Ecc Mem*, II, c27.

⁷¹ Kidd (1899), 27, for example, argues they were produced by a commission similar to the one established for the reform of canon law, in view of the resemblance of the theology of the *Articles* and the *Reformatio*. No evidence for such a commission, however, is to be found. Schaff (1877), 614, produces no evidence for his claim that drafts were circulated to the foreign divines; his sole reference is to the known consultation of the king's chaplains, including Knox.

⁷² John ab Ulmis to Bullinger, 30 Apr 1550, *OL* II, 404; *ET*, 266. The letter also mentions that Martyr 'is now employed in matters of great importance'; *OL* II, 407; *ET*, 268-9.

⁷³ *BDS* 3: 13-185, 6.2: 214-5; Other possibilities for this 'confessionem Argentinensis ecclesiae jussu et consilio Petri et Utenhovii e me Latinitate donatam' (*ET*, 266) include the brief articles of the 1533-34 Strasbourg synod, or perhaps Bucer's 1534 catechism, which had a pronounced emphasis on discipline. Cf Burnett (1994), 80-86.

matched by a general obscurity over the process by which the *Articles* were prepared. Martyr was certainly aware of debates within the evangelical leadership over England's eucharistic doctrine. On 14 June 1552, he reported to Bullinger that the 'matter which was desired of all good men, and which the King's majesty had not a little at heart, could not be accomplished', on account of a disagreement: 'whether grace is conferred by virtue of the Sacraments, is a point about which many are in doubt'.⁷⁴ However, the comment almost certainly refers to disagreements over the sacraments on the canon law reform commission, rather than to the drafting of the *Articles*.⁷⁵ Indeed, the official record suggests that at this date their preparation was gathering pace, rather than stalling as Martyr's words would suggest. A connection cannot be ruled out, but even if the letter were to refer to the *Articles*, it would not be conclusive evidence of Martyr's direct involvement. He was in any case well aware of the potential for sacramental disagreements among the protagonists of reform.

The suggestion that Martyr's writings lie behind the wording of some of the articles is, however, a serious one. Two articles in particular have attracted comment. The treatment of the sacraments in Article Twenty-Eight, *De baptismo*, has parallels in Martyr's discussion of chapter six of Romans, on which he lectured in Oxford. Pocock argued that the expressions of this article were borrowed from Martyr, and that he may even have compiled it.⁷⁶ A similar dependence of thought has been suggested in Article Seventeen, *De praedestinatione et electione*, freshly composed for the *Forty-Two Articles*.⁷⁷ However, this article not only omits any reference to reprobation, a characteristic emphasis of Martyr's mature thought, but, as Null has recently demonstrated, also corresponds closely to Cranmer's own thought.⁷⁸ Further than this it is speculative to proceed. In particular, despite England's marked shift to a Reformed position in sacramental theology since the 1538 *Thirteen Articles*, the beliefs of Cranmer and Martyr were so close that, without a manuscript trail, the attempt to discern the original

⁷⁴ Martyr to Bullinger, 14 Jun 1552, Gorham, 281.

⁷⁵ MacCulloch (1996), 520, against Hardwick (1859), 96-7.

⁷⁶ N. Pocock, 'Preparations for the Second Prayer Book of Edward VI: Some Scarce published Works of 1549-52', *Church Quarterly Review* 37 (1893), 160.

⁷⁷ Anderson (1975), 146-7, draws attention to the similarity of phraseology between the article and Martyr's definition of predestination in *Rom*, 411, stemming from his Oxford lectures.

⁷⁸ J. Ashley Null, *Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine of Repentance: Renewing the Power to Love* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 235-6. On Martyr's mature doctrine of predestination, see James (1998), 65-89. In an examination of Martyr's thought which relies heavily on Donnelly (1976a), P. White, *Predestination. policy and polemic: Conflict and consensus in the English Church from the Reformation to the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 49-59, also concludes that the article's omission of reprobation precludes its characterisation as Vermiglian, though he concedes Martyr's influence.

authorial hand behind the relevant articles is likely to be fruitless.

More conclusive, however is the divergence of the *Forty-Two Articles* from Martyr's ecclesiology at several salient points. The most obvious example of this is Article Twenty, *De ecclesia*, which by sixteenth-century standards is a most attenuated statement. O'Donovan notes that the 'disappearance of the invisible church from the *Articles* [is] most glaringly apparent here'.⁷⁹ The lengthy treatment of the *Thirteen Articles* was deliberately abandoned in 1553 for a terse definition, normally considered to be based on the seventh article of the 1530 *Augsburg Confession*.⁸⁰ The direction of change does not suggest that Martyr's views were dominant: the article's author seemed intent on a minimal statement of England's ecclesial identity. Even *Augsburg's* brief initial clause, stating that 'one holy Christian church will be and remain for ever', was dropped.⁸¹ Martyr's own emphasis on the church as primarily a divine company of regenerate believers is wholly absent. Equally lacking is his dynamic conception of the universal church as the body of Christ. Nor is a connection made between the doctrines of election and union with Christ and that of the church.

One modification arguably suggests a preference for the terminology of the Reformed churches over the *Augsburg Confession's* Lutheranism. Whereas the latter had identified the church as the assembly where 'the gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel', for Article Twenty it is the place where 'the pure Word of God is preached and the sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance'.⁸² This is closer to Martyr's usage, and in its preference for 'the Word of God' over 'the gospel', is characteristic of the south German and Swiss approach.⁸³ Similarly, the article's choice of *coetus* over *Augsburg's congregatio* parallels Martyr's usage, though this is scarcely sufficiently unusual to demonstrate influence. If such alterations suggest that some of the terminology of Martyr and his peers was acceptable to Cranmer, the silence of the article on other distinctives of their

⁷⁹ Oliver O'Donovan, *On the Thirty-Nine Articles: A Conversation with Tudor Christianity* (Carlisle: Latimer/Paternoster, 1986), 88.

⁸⁰ Schaff (1877) I, 625-7; Hardwick (1859), 103, 386-7.

⁸¹ *Confessions and Catechisms*, ed. Noll, 89-90.

⁸² *Confessions and Catechisms*, ed. Noll, 89-90; DER, 296.

⁸³ Though the *Tetrapolitan Confession* had retained 'gospel' as the mark of the church, as did the 1536 *Geneva Confession*, the trend to define the church by the preaching of 'the Word of God' was clear. The approach was heralded by the 1528 *Ten Theses* of Bern, and followed by the *Lausanne Confession* of 1536. Within twenty years it became a standard of Reformed confessions, seen for example in the 1559 *French Confession of Faith*, the 1560 *Scots Confession*, and the 1566 *Second Helvetic Confession*. *Reformed Confessions of the 16th Century*, ed. Arthur C. Cochrane (London: SCM, 1966), 49, 72-3, 115-16, 124-5, 153-4, 176-7, 265.

ecclesiology suggests the archbishop retained his independence in its final composition. In particular in its reluctance to define the church primarily as the body of the elect, the article corresponds to the 'rough and ready' ecclesiology which Cranmer had adopted by the early 1540s and which, in the judgment of Bromiley, he saw little reason significantly to modify.⁸⁴

The decision to retain a two-mark doctrine of the visible church is a further sign of Cranmer's conservatism and the limits of Martyr's influence. The Italian was the foremost among several vocal advocates in England of a doctrine of the marks which included discipline.⁸⁵ Moreover, we know that Cranmer himself envisaged disciplinary reform. The opening words of the 1552 *Prayer Book's* 'Commination against Sinners' repeated the hopes of the first book for the restoration of public penance for notorious sinners.⁸⁶ Yet with the exception of a single sentence on the treatment of excommunicates, the *Forty-Two Articles* are silent on the question of church discipline.⁸⁷ Article Twenty itself is content with the *Augsburg*-derived two-mark doctrine. Cranmer's preference for adapting existing material here complemented his reluctance to identify the English church unequivocally with the Swiss churches. Probably lingering hopes for an international consensus embracing Melancthon as well as Bullinger and Calvin required the *Forty-Two Articles* to be acceptable to a range of opinion and hence to avoid giving unnecessary offence.

The other articles dealing with the church reveal a similar preference to adapt earlier material, rather than a desire to express a fresh ecclesiology. Moreover, in the absence of documentary evidence, the assignation of new material to a particular source can rarely be more than speculative. Articles Twenty-One, *De ecclesiae auctoritate*, and Twenty-Two, *De auctoritate conciliorum generalium*, were new compositions dealing with the limits imposed by Scripture on the church's freedom to order its life, and on the nature of councils. Martyr's most extensive comments on the objects and nature of

⁸⁴ Bromiley (1956), 44-6. It is instructive to compare the article with the more prolix and comprehensive fifth article of the *Thirteen Articles*, which explicitly teaches that 'the word Church has two main meanings; one of which means the congregation of all the saints and true believers, who really believe in Christ the Head and are sanctified by his Spirit'; *DER*, 189.

⁸⁵ See, for example, Thomas Becon, *The Catechism*, ed. John Ayre (Cambridge: Parker Society, 1844), 42.

⁸⁶ *The Two Liturgies, A.D. 1549, and A.D. 1552, etc.*, ed. Joseph Ketley (Cambridge: Parker Society, 1844), 151, 323. The *Thirteen Articles* had hinted at the need for disciplinary procedures in the church, but the references were excised when the material was adapted for the *Forty-Two Articles*, *DER*, 190.

⁸⁷ Article Thirty-Two, *Excommunicati vitati sunt*.

ecclesiastical laws, mainly arising in the later commentary on 1 Samuel, are consistent with the position of these articles.⁸⁸ His views on councils found, *inter alia*, in the 1551 Corinthians commentary correspond to the insistence of Article Twenty-Two that their authority stems from their allegiance to Scripture. On the other hand, the article's position that councils can be legitimately be summoned only by the magistrate, reflects Cranmer's theology more than Martyr's.⁸⁹

Similarly, while Martyr would have approved of Article Twenty-Four's insistence on lawful calling to ministry, the wording largely stems from *Augsburg's* fourteenth article and the tenth of the *Thirteen Articles*. The remaining articles on the church - Articles Twenty-Seven, *Ministrorum malitia non tollit efficaciam institutionum divinarum*, and Thirty-Three, *Traditiones ecclesiasticae* - are similarly indebted to the *Thirteen Articles*, though the former adds the proviso that 'it pertains to the discipline of the church' that evil ministers should be judged and deposed. However, the changes made in 1553 are more plausibly explained as arising from the need to answer anabaptist and traditional criticisms than reflecting a determined attempt to lay a fresh theological foundation.

The articles on the church thus reflect English concerns and Cranmer's caution more than contemporary, continental influence. Ecclesiologically, they suggest that the perceived need was to repudiate Roman claims rather than to articulate a comprehensive alternative. Moreover, though on other projects Cranmer willingly enlisted the help of foreign theologians and others, the *Articles* were a project which he kept peculiarly to himself, as the privy council records suggests. Their content corroborates this. On the issues with which Cranmer was closely concerned, notably the sacramental questions, the articles reflect the consensus he sought to build. On matters less important to the archbishop, he preferred to adapt older, familiar material rather than to commission new, potentially provocative clauses. Ecclesiology was one such case. According to one study, 'apart from the discussion of authority, he never made a very detailed investigation of the question'.⁹⁰ The provision of a comprehensive and careful Reformed definition of the church in all its aspects was not a priority.

Nevertheless, the publication of the *Articles* was accompanied by an official document whose ecclesiology was noticeably closer to Martyr's. A new catechism, anonymously

⁸⁸ Scholion *De Legibus Ecclesiasticis* from the commentary on 1 Samuel 14, LC IV.4.1-22.

⁸⁹ *Cor*, 26^v-27^f: At quando adversus sacrarum literarum testimonia decernunt, nequaquam toleranda sunt.

⁹⁰ Bromiley (1956), 42.

prepared by John Ponet, was agreed by the same shadowy group of senior clergy which approved the *Articles* in March 1553, and was published in the same printing.⁹¹ Following a spell as chaplain to Cranmer at the time the foreign refugee scholars were arriving at Lambeth, Ponet was successively Bishop of Rochester and Winchester.⁹² His catechism's teaching on the church displays no obvious dependence on Martyr but its overall emphases correspond to his.⁹³

Unlike the *Forty-Two Articles*, this document speaks of the church in both its invisible and visible aspects. The church is a divine institution, which owes its origin and life to God's initiative: 'the church which is an assembly of men called to everlasting salvation, is both gathered together, and governed by the Holy Ghost'.⁹⁴ Its membership is explicitly connected with election. Further, it has Christ for its head. Indeed, though he also speaks of the church as a kingdom or commonwealth, and Christ as sovereign, Ponet makes recurrent use of the body metaphor. The faith of believers perceives the mysteries of God, brings peace, and takes hold of the righteousness of Christ.⁹⁵

Turning to the marks of the church, the catechism first defines the church as a multitude professing the New Testament, learning Christ, and governed by his laws, and using the sacraments according to the apostolic teachings. The marks then specified are fourfold:

first, pure preaching of the gospel: then brotherly love, out of which as members of all one body, springs good will of each to other: thirdly upright and uncorrupted use of the Lord's sacraments, according to the ordinance of the gospel: last of all brotherly correction, and excommunication, or banishing those out of the church, that will not

⁹¹ John Ponet, *A short Catechisme, or playne instruction, conteynyng the summe of Christian learninge, sett fourth by the Kings maiesties authoritie, for all Scholemaisters to teache* (London: John Day 1553); MacCulloch (1996), 535-8. Ponet's authorship is attested by a letter of John Cheke of 7 June 1553, OL I, 142; ET, 93.

⁹² W.S.Hudson, *John Ponet (1516?-1556): Advocate of Limited Monarchy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), 22, 43, 48.

⁹³ Similarities to Martyr's thought occur in other sections. On the ubiquitarian question, Ponet uses the metaphor of Christ's body being present to faith as the sun is present to the eye, paralleling a similar illustration used by Martyr in his dedication to Cranmer of his 1549 *Tractatio*; Ponet, *Catechism*, Eiv fol xxviii^v; Martyr, *Tractatio*, tiii^f; PML 7: 17. On the other hand, in his subsequent commendation of tyrannicide, Ponet was to move far from Martyr's own views of the relationship of subject and magistrate, and there is no evidence to suggest he was ever as close to Martyr as other English exiles such as Jewel and Sandys; Hudson, 151-62.

⁹⁴ Ponet, *Catechism*, Giiii^v.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, Fiiii, fol xxxvii^f; Giiii^v.

amend their lives. This mark the holy fathers termed discipline.⁹⁶

The description of four marks precludes too close an identification with Martyr's thought. Ponet's introduction of 'brotherly love' as a mark is reminiscent of the social emphases of Bucer's ecclesiology, as well as of Ridley's.⁹⁷ Yet the simplicity of his definition and the inclusion of the term 'brotherly correction' recalls Martyr's approach and emphasis. Other contemporaries more readily added further marks, though preaching, the sacraments and ecclesiastical discipline were generally the foremost.⁹⁸

Ponet was familiar with England's Italian scholars, and even translated Bernardino Ochino's *Tragedy or Dialogue* into English. At one point Martyr evidently felt some pastoral responsibility for encouraging him.⁹⁹ To claim that his catechism derives from Martyr is to go beyond the evidence.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, its ecclesiology is both more comprehensive, and more consistent with Martyr's own thought, than that of the *Articles*. The evidence of the catechism indicates that opinion among the churchmen surrounding Cranmer was more sympathetic to the position Martyr represented than the *Articles* alone suggest.

Sacraments and Discipline

Martyr's interventions in the eucharistic controversies in England were almost exclusively related to the nature of Christ's presence in the Supper. This was the focus of the brief he wrote for Somerset for the December 1548 House of Lords debate, as

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, Gi fol xli^v.

⁹⁷ On Bucer's specification of love as a mark of the church, van't Spijker (1994), 35-6, Augustijn (1994), 112-13; Nicholas Ridley, *Works* (Cambridge: Parker Society, 1841), 123.

⁹⁸ Becon, chaplain to Somerset and Cranmer, nominated preaching, the sacraments, fervent prayer, and ecclesiastical discipline by which the true church might be discerned, but added that these were simply the principal marks - others could be added; Becon, 42.

⁹⁹ Bernardino Ochino, *A tragedie or dialogue* (1549), RSTC 18770; cf Hudson (1942), 27; Martyr to Utenhoven 21 Sep 1548, Gorham, 54.

¹⁰⁰ The source for Huelin's claim that Martyr was Ponet's 'theological referee' is not clear. Taking the view that the theology of the catechism was atypically extreme, Huelin argues that 'in view of the relationship existing between Ponet and Martyr, one may believe that the latter was as responsible for its contents as its actual author. Indeed much of it may have come from Martyr's pen, since he was a far more learned theologian than John Ponet.' Evidence to support this assertion is wanting, and since the theology of both Ponet and Martyr was in any case closer to the mainstream of evangelical opinion than Huelin allows, the dependence he claims is not a necessary one. Huelin (1956), 94

well as the 1549 Oxford disputation.¹⁰¹ Martyr's doctrines of union with Christ and of the church do influence his eucharistic theology: communicants share in one table, which expresses their joint membership and unity in Christ, and inspires them to reconciliation and practical loving service.¹⁰² However, although these ecclesiological notes are not absent from either the 1549 or 1552 *Prayer Books*, they cannot be plausibly attributed to Martyr's influence.

The extent of his involvement with the successive attempts at liturgical reform is not known with precision, though in the preparation of the *Second Prayer Book*, published in 1552, it was extensive.¹⁰³ The memorandum he submitted to Cranmer on changes to the 1549 book is lost. Our knowledge of its contents comes from his comment to Bucer that it was substantially in agreement with his *Censura*. Their only significant divergence was over the order for the Sunday communion of the sick. Martyr's recommendation was that the 'words of the supper' should be said in the presence of the sick person, since 'they belong more to men than to bread or to wine'.¹⁰⁴

Martyr's liturgical fingerprints are principally evident in the wording of the first exhortation in the 1552 communion order. This was translated and slightly abbreviated

¹⁰¹ BL Royal MSS 17 C V & 17 B XXXIX; Martyr, *Tractatio* . . . ; PML 7.

¹⁰² Martyr, *Tractatio*, ti^r; PML 7: 12-13.

¹⁰³ For the text of the *Prayer Books* of Edward VI's reign, *The Two Liturgies* (1844). Huelin, 42, suggests that Martyr was not involved in the preparation of the 1549 book, but the 1548 memorandum is a clear sign that from early in his time in England, Martyr's abilities in this area were recognised by Cranmer and his circle, though as his dedicatory preface to the 1549 *Tractatio*, indicates, the intellectual traffic between Martyr and Cranmer was far from one-way: *ibid*, aii^r; PML 7: 7. But Martyr's direct involvement with the drafting of the 1549 book cannot be ruled out. B. Spinks, 'And with Thy Holye Spirite and Worde': Further thoughts on the Source of Cranmer's Petition for Sanctification in the 1549 Communion Service', in *Thomas Cranmer, Essays in Commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of his Birth*, ed. M. Johnson (Durham: Turnstone, 1990), 94-102, argues that Martyr's hand lies behind the inclusion of the epiclesis in the 1549 communion rite, observing theological similarities with Martyr's comments in the 1549 *Tractatio* and *Disputatio*, and noting that Bucer's *Censura* suggests altering the wording so that the invocation of the Holy Spirit is over the congregation rather than the elements. In the event, probably as a consequence of Gardiner's exploitation of the potential ambiguity of including an epiclesis, in 1552 the prayer was dropped altogether.

¹⁰⁴ Martyr to Bucer, 10 Jan 1551, Gorham, 228. On the detail of the changes in the 1552 book attributable to Bucer and Martyr's comments, see F.E. Brightman, *The English Rite* (2nd edition, London: Rivingtons, 1921), cxliv, clv.

by Cranmer from Martyr's original draft.¹⁰⁵ The exhortation, for 'certain times when the Curate shall see the people negligent to come to the Holy Communion', was probably commissioned in response to the reluctance of people to attend communion weekly, as the 1549 book had intended. It alludes to Christ's parable of the banquet in Matthew 22.2-8. The focus falls on the invitation to the individual to participate in the feast of the Lord's Supper, for the sake of his salvation. The communal aspect of the Supper is not forgotten: 'you are bound to perform the memorial of his death here together with the other brethren'. This ecclesiological dimension is also emphasised in Martyr's contention that the offence of refusing to come to the service is exceeded by that of attenders who decline to communicate. To spectate while others share the Supper is to do 'a greater injury to God' and 'to make a mockery of Christ's mysteries'. It is better to depart altogether, and to reflect that to abstain is to separate oneself 'from this precisely: from God, from Christ, from your brothers, from the banquet of supreme love'.¹⁰⁶ The thrust of his appeal is based on the benefits of participation to the individual and the peril of provoking God, but the ecclesiological damage caused by such separation is not neglected.

Despite the inclusion of this exhortation in his communion order, the disciplinary dimensions of liturgical reform were not a particular concern of Cranmer's. We have noted how the introduction to the 1552 'Commination against Sinners' envisages a reintroduction of formal church discipline. However, the restoration Cranmer here anticipated was, rather surprisingly, of annual public penance for notorious sinners. As the rubric comments, this was the practice of the early church, but its revival in this form was not generally envisaged by the continental reformers, and is also distinctly different from Martyr's conception of church discipline. Its survival unchanged from the 1549 book confirms that Cranmer's was the dominant hand in the composition.

We have noted how Martyr clearly shared Bucer's concerns over the want of church discipline in England, and shall see how he pressed home this point in his sermons on the 1549 rebellions.¹⁰⁷ Other refugee scholars were more urgent and prescriptive in

¹⁰⁵ Alan Beesley, 'An Unpublished Source of the Book of Common Prayer: Peter Martyr Vermigli's "Adhortatio ad Coenam Domini Mysticam"', *JEH* 19 (1968), 83-8; *LC* 1067; recent translation in *PML* 5: 275-76; *The Two Liturgies*, 271-73. The piece became the second exhortation in the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*.

¹⁰⁶ *LC* 1067, *PML* 5: 276.

¹⁰⁷ Martyr to Bucer, Feb 1551, Gorham, 232.

advocating its practice, with Calvin adding his occasional encouragement from afar.¹⁰⁸ After leaving England, Martyr became more evidently insistent. Writing to the leaders of the Reformed church in Poland in 1566, and singling out for lament the tragedy of the Marian church in England, he urged the rapid implementation of discipline. It will be accepted more easily, he argues, in the first flush of enthusiasm for the gospel, 'since afterwards a certain coolness creeps in'. He continues, most plausibly with reference to his English experience:

Very many churches could serve you as examples of how we labour in vain without that discipline; they did not want to shoulder this so salutary yoke during the foundation stage of their reformation; later they could never be brought in line by any just rule touching their morals and life. [. . .] It is then a serious disaster and certain destruction for the churches if the sinews of discipline are missing from them.¹⁰⁹

Martyr's unease with the regime's failings had not led him clearly to align himself with those native Protestant propagandists who, as Edward's reign wore on, pressed openly for change.¹¹⁰ It is possible that this relative silence stemmed from awareness of the equivocal commitment of many church leaders to the principles of reform. His letters often bewail the lack of episcopal support for change, even if he does not follow others in explicitly ascribing the delay in instituting biblical discipline to the unreliability of the

¹⁰⁸ Bucer's prescription for England is seen most comprehensively in the 1550 *De Regno Christi*, where chapters seven to ten of the first book deal with his threefold division of discipline into life and morals, penance, and 'holy ceremonies'; *De Regno Christi*, in *Melanchthon and Bucer*, LCC 19 (1969), 236-50; cf also his letter to Hooper, Nov 1550, where he laments the silence of ecclesiastical discipline and concludes 'it follows of necessity that all fear of God withers away from the hearts of men', Gorham, 202. Further evidence of contemporary agitation for disciplinary reform is to be found among the Yelverton manuscripts in the British Library, which include a lengthy paper by Pierre Alexandre, dated 1553, the *Tractatus perutilis et necessarius de vera Ecclesia disciplina et excommunicatione*, BL Add MS 48040, fols 213^r-248^v. See also Calvin to Somerset, 22 Oct 1548, CR 41: 64-77; Gorham, 70.

¹⁰⁹ Martyr to the Polish Lords Professing the Gospel and to the Ministers of their Churches, 14 Feb 1556, LC 1111-12; PML 5: 147.

¹¹⁰ Davies (1987), 89-95, points out that pressure for the erection of a functioning system of ecclesiastical discipline was limited to a few writers and preachers. Despite its appearance, for example, in the catechisms of Becon, Edmund Allen and Ponet, in the sermons of Latimer and other, and most extensively in John Foxe's *De censura sive excommunicatione ecclesiastica rectoque eius usu . . .* (London: Mierdmann, 1551), enthusiasm among keen protestants was always tempered by strong memories of 'popish' misuse, and a suspicion of 'externals'.

bench.¹¹¹ If his advice to Cranmer coincided with his later counsel to the Polish church to forge ahead with change, it has left no trace in the record.

Order in Church and State

Introductory

Martyr's political thought was first articulated in a systematic way during his time in Oxford. His 1550-1 Romans lectures formed the basis for his subsequent commentary on the letter, with its significant comments on the relationship of church and magistrate.¹¹² The necessity for relationships, both in society and between the civil and ecclesiastical estates, to reflect the order that God has placed in creation, was a constant. God is the author of all powers, and whatever form of government exists in a nation, it is to be taken as God's provision for the order of that society. Despite the ecclesiastical dilemmas this doctrine entailed for the reformers, Martyr contemplated no alternative.¹¹³ The social order which he found in Scripture envisaged an integration of ecclesiastical and temporal authority in which minister and magistrate discharged different functions, but in one polity where all authority derived from God.¹¹⁴ Moreover, the political reverses which the Reformation in Europe suffered did not cause him to adjust his doctrine. Resolution of the theological dilemma posed by catastrophe was

¹¹¹ *OL* II, 469, 477, 479, 481; *ET*, 310, 314, 315-16, 317. The reluctance of the regime to take in hand the reform of discipline is reflected in a comment in the young Edward VI's 1551 'Discourse on the Reformation of Abuses', in *Literary Remains of Edward VI*, ed. J.G. Nichols (London, 1857), II, 478. Summarising the ecclesiastical governance of the realm, he observes of the exercise of discipline 'But because those bishops who should execute, some for papistry, some for ignorance, some for their ill name, some for all these, are men unable to execute discipline, it is therefore a thing unmeet for these men'. See also Strype, *Ecc Mem*, II, 366, for opposition to discipline; also Cox to Bullinger, 5 Oct 1552, *OL* I, 123; *ET*, 80-1.

¹¹² John ab Ulmis to Bullinger, 5 Nov 1550, *OL* II, 419; *ET*, 276-7, reveals that Martyr was lecturing daily, at 9am, on Romans; by March 1552, his work on the epistle was sufficiently advanced that he reported to Bullinger his anxiety to finish the work and have it printed in Zürich, *OL* II, 504; *ET*, 331; in November 1553, writing from Strasbourg, he expects to see it printed 'this year', though in the event publication did not take place until 1558, *OL* II, 507; *ET*, 332-3.

¹¹³ *Rom*, 640-8; *Romans*, 426^v-431^v. Loades (1970), 52-100, gives a useful exposition of the dilemmas which acceptance of the royal supremacy posed under Edward VI for both traditionalists such as Gardiner and for evangelicals dependent on magisterial goodwill for every reforming move.

¹¹⁴ *Rom*, 646-7; *Romans*, 431^r.

achieved through an understanding of the church being in this age 'under the cross': one reason for its suffering was the incurring of divine judgment for its lack of zeal for the evangelical faith.¹¹⁵ Martyr's approach to the shape of England's church polity reflected these priorities, and embodied their tensions.

An ordered church: Prince, Protector and ecclesiastical servant

By the time of Martyr's arrival in England, the essential elements of the relationship between church and crown were already in place. Conceptually and jurisdictionally, not least in Cranmer's mind, the visible church was an integral part of the Tudor polity.¹¹⁶ Martyr registered no surprise or objection to this practical subordination of the church to the magistrate. Though his written works do not envisage such a degree of dependence, his silence is consistent with his insistence on the responsibility of the prince to restore a true order in religion where the ministers of the church are unwilling or incapable of this task.

We have also noted how Martyr's correspondence shows a rapid apprehension of the main contours of the English polity. He was well aware that with the precocious king yet in his minority, the initiative lay with his principal counsellors.¹¹⁷ He was also conscious that the young monarch was far from a cipher. Edward VI's attitude and interests, he expected, would be increasingly decisive in the process of reform. Martyr found in this an altogether biblical pattern of church government, drawing on both Old and New Testament precedents.

Indeed, Martyr was in no doubt that the king's evangelical convictions were genuine and that he took a growing interest in the reform of the church carried out in his name. In

¹¹⁵ For Martyr's interpretation of persecution and reverses, see for example his letters to the Canons of San Frediano, 24 Aug 1542, McNair (1967), 287-88, *PML* 5: 65-66, and to the Brethren at Lucca, 1556, *LC* 1100-5, *PML* 5: 155-69.

¹¹⁶ Bromley (1956), 52-3: 'in Cranmer's thinking the ministry has been almost completely overwhelmed by the royal supremacy. . . . The heart of Cranmer's understanding is not merely that he subjugates the ecclesiastical to the temporal office, but that he seems to oppose to a relativized ministry (which is a matter of order) the absolutized monarchy (which is a matter of divine law)'.

¹¹⁷ *LC* 1123; *PML* 5: 74. Cf also Simler's *Oratio*, *PML* 5, 32-3, which probably reflects Martyr's own assessment: After the death of King Henry of England, his son Edward on the advice of his tutors and especially of his uncle Edward Duke of Somerset, and of Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury and primate of all England, decided to abolish the papal religion and to reform the churches according to the word of God.

1551 he dedicated his first commentary to Edward, praising in conventionally fulsome terms his zeal but also clearly identifying the monarch as standing in succession to the 'Davids, Hezechiahs, Josiahs, Constantines and Theodosiuses' whom God raises up in difficult times to relieve and restore the church. To this task, he argued, the message of I Corinthians was especially well adapted.¹¹⁸ The following year, the king was 'truly holy, and inflamed with much zeal for godliness', and 'nothing can increase his inclination and love for religion'. In his undated Oxford sermon on the first chapter of Haggai, Martyr claims in connection with the restoration of the church, 'His Majesty the King desires nothing more'.¹¹⁹ Shortly after the king's death Martyr praised 'the godly efforts of His Majesty' in restoring the church.¹²⁰

As we have seen, Martyr's understanding of the magistrate's role in supervising religion was based not only on his view of Christ's submission and the Pauline injunctions, but also explicitly on the example of the Old Testament kings of Israel. Frequent references by Martyr and his contemporaries to the example of Josiah in reforming the religion of Judah indicate their attachment to this reading of 'sacred history'.¹²¹ The past provides the pattern for the present. Although Christ fulfils of the Old Testament and is the king of kings, this does not exclude parallels being drawn between Old Testament sacral monarchy and sixteenth-century government.¹²² In the hopeful circumstances of 1547-1553, such typology helped to legitimate the process of reform, though the regime's manoeuvring in the succession crisis of 1553 was to complicate its future use. Martyr's subsequent solution was to overlook the attempt to disinherit Elizabeth along with Mary. On Elizabeth's accession in 1558, he ascribed Edward's death to the ingratitude of his subjects, and flattered the new queen with references to her greater maturity in years, comparing her life and role with those of David, in both his afflictions and his achievement.¹²³

However, though the opinions of the king were increasingly significant in the reform process, Martyr knew that the pace of reform under a minority was critically dependent

¹¹⁸ *Cor*, 2I-V.

¹¹⁹ *CP* 14-15; *PML* 5: 256.

¹²⁰ *LC* 1037; *PML* 5: 304.

¹²¹ Martyr to Bullinger and to Gualter, 1 Jun 1550, *OL* II, 482, 485; *ET*, 318, 319-20; Calvin to Edward VI, 1 Jan 1551, *CR* 41: 669-70; *OL* II, 708; *ET*, 460. For the use of Old Testament kings as exemplars in popular English publications, see Davies (1988), 263.

¹²² *Cor*, aa2^v. Martyr's understanding of the use of sacred history is also seen in the dedicatory epistle to his Judges commentary: *Iud*, un-numbered; *Judges*, Bi^v-ii^v.

¹²³ Martyr to Queen Elizabeth I, 22 Dec 1558, *LC* 1122-3; *PML* 5: 172-5.

both on the determination and agreement of those who governed in Edward's name, and on the consent of parliament.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, he does not identify England as a mixed polity, which would be at variance with his assertion elsewhere that God appoints a single form of government for each people, and in the state if not in the church, does not favour their combination.¹²⁵ Moreover, though he understands the significance of parliament, he recognises that the key players in the reform of the church sat around the privy council board, and that among these Cranmer and Somerset or Northumberland were much the most significant figures.

Despite his correspondence with Cheke and Cecil, his knowledge of the working of the regime appears to stem mainly from his relationship with Cranmer. The reform of the *Prayer Book* suggests that there were limits to Cranmer's confiding in Martyr, even when they were together at Lambeth.¹²⁶ Nevertheless, Cranmer's friendship and growing reliance on his counsel gave Martyr an insight into the regime's plans which would otherwise have eluded him in his post in Oxford.¹²⁷ The accuracy of his information itself suggests a reliable source. By comparison with Bullinger's other correspondents in England, for example, Martyr's comments on political developments are less frequent and less gossipy, but generally more accurate.

It is possible that it was Cranmer's influence which accounts for Martyr's curiously public approbation of Somerset following his release from prison in February 1550, in publishing a *prima facie* pastoral letter of comfort.¹²⁸ It was Cranmer who had broken the deadlock in the political crisis of the previous autumn, securing protection for Somerset's life as the price of his surrender of the person of the king to the London lords.¹²⁹ By the time the duke was released, the continuation of the policy of religious

¹²⁴ David Loades, *John Dudley: Duke of Northumberland* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 176, 195-197 plausibly suggests that Dudley's growing support for more radical reform in 1551 stemmed not from genuine theological interest but rather from the duke's apprehension that the king's continued favour was secured by agreement with his increasingly pronounced Protestantism.

¹²⁵ Kingdon (1980a), xi.

¹²⁶ Martyr to Bucer, 10 Jan 1551, Gorham, 229: 'It has now been decided in their conference, as the Most Reverend informs me, that many things shall be changed; but what corrections they have decided upon, he did not explain to me, nor was I so bold as to ask him'.

¹²⁷ cf Martyr to Bullinger, 26 Oct 1551, *OL* II, 499-500, *ET*, 328: Martyr laments he is unable to promote Vergerio's cause partly owing to his remoteness from 'persons in power'; on Martyr's interest in the political progress of reform, see *OL* II, 425, 468-470, 480, 503; Gorham, 229, 232, 281-282.

¹²⁸ Martyr, *An epistle unto the right honorable and christian Prince, the Duke of Somerset*, tr., Thomas Norton, (London: Walter Lynne, 1550).

¹²⁹ Loades (1996), 138-139.

reform had been settled. Despite his precarious position, Martyr continued to see Somerset in a unique light as a genuine supporter of the evangelical cause, attributing his release as a vindictory deliverance by Christ himself.¹³⁰ By comparison, Martyr's writings are silent on Northumberland's attachment to the evangelical cause, though the pace of reform was in fact to accelerate under his supervision.

Martyr was no politician and was not a participant in the political process through which Cranmer and his allies primarily sought to reform the English church. Though his ecclesiology did not envisage the degree of subordination of church to the prince which Cranmer had embraced, there is no trace of any significant tension between them on this issue in the record of his time in England. Martyr shared Bucer's frustration with the shortcomings of magisterial reform, but his hopes were pinned on the Edwardian regime. He did not conceive of the restoration of religion other than through the divinely instituted political order. Indeed, when it came to the two most public threats to the new order, in both cases his support was given, explicitly in the interests of reform, to the government position.

Order under threat I : the 1549 'stirs'

In the late spring and early summer of 1549, a rash of popular revolts erupted across southern England, from Lincolnshire to Cornwall. The rebels' common complaint was against agricultural enclosures and other economic grievances, but their religious affiliations separated them into two distinct movements. In the eastern counties the malcontents generally stressed their support for the continuing reform of religion, but in Oxfordshire, Devon and Cornwall, the situation was the reverse. Here, the imposition of the 1549 *Prayer Book* provided the catalyst for revolt, and the return of the old religion was a major objective. After some initial hesitation these western risings were crushed with overwhelming force. Though a similar fate ultimately befell the eastern rebels, here it came only after the failure of repeated attempts at conciliation, pioneered

¹³⁰ Martyr, *Epistle to Somerset*, Av^v: 'As for all us that do embrace godliness, we do confess with one mouth with one accord, that Christ has taken your part.'; Martyr to Bullinger, 27 Jan 1550, *OL* II, 480, *ET*, 316, reports his forthcoming release: 'These things are very pleasing to godly persons, because they know him by experience to have been a most firm supporter of religion.' For Somerset's policy of toleration, see J.N. King, *English Reformation Literature: The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 78, 82-83.

by Somerset himself.¹³¹

Insurrection on this scale had not been seen since 1381, and the Edwardian regime momentarily tottered. Indeed, Somerset's willingness to treat with the eastern rebels was a sign of its insecurity, and his fall from power in October was a delayed consequence of his handling of the challenge to authority. The threat to stability was real, and the king's foreign guests learnt this at first hand. Bucer's much delayed arrival in Cambridge coincided with the July flaring up of trouble in the region; postponing the assumption of his chair, he quickly sought refuge with Ely's bishop. As the most prominent Oxford advocate of reform, Martyr was even more exposed and found himself a specific target of the rebels; he fled to safety in London.¹³²

The visitors were soon pressed into more constructive engagement with the crisis by a regime eager for theological vindication of its position. Despite the support of the eastern rebels for religious change, the 'stirs' represented both an assault on the 'common weal', and a challenge to the authority of the magistrate. In the eyes of Cranmer and his colleagues, since all authority was divinely instituted, rebellion against lawful government also constituted a rejection of God's rule. Cranmer, as archbishop as well as a privy councillor and magnate in his own right, was fully involved in the government's response. As it sought to seize the propaganda initiative in mid-July 1549, he commissioned a number of writers to produce works supportive of the regime. He had no hesitation in marshalling minister alongside magistrate in response, and looked to his theological advisers for support.¹³³

Martyr's involvement in this campaign is disclosed in a series of documents preserved in the Parker Library in Cambridge. These comprise two Latin sermons, apparently composed for Cranmer's own use, and a shorter memorandum, the *Cogitationes*, on the subject of rebellion. Adapted by Cranmer, the sermons provided the basis for a sermon against rebellion which he delivered in St Paul's on 21 July 1549 as the centre-piece of

¹³¹ MacCulloch (1996), 429-36; Susan Brigden, *New Worlds, Lost Worlds: The Rule of the Tudors, 1485-1603* (London: Allen Lane, 2000), 185-88, 190-91; B.L. Beer, *Rebellion and Riot: Popular Disorder in England during the Reign of Edward VI* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1982).

¹³² Simler, *Oratio*, PML 5: 37.

¹³³ Apart from Martyr, those whose pens were enlisted included Cheke, who wrote *The Hurt of Sedition*, Ochino, and Bucer. Cf P.M.J. McNair, 'Ochino on sedition: an Italian dialogue of the sixteenth century', *Italian Studies* 15 (1960), 36-49; John Strype *Memorials of The Most Reverend Father in God, Thomas Cranmer* (London: Richard Chiswell, 1694), II, 187, 266-69

the propaganda riposte to the risings.¹³⁴ Apart from one paper by Valdo Vinay, these documents have attracted little detailed study to date.¹³⁵ They shed further light on Martyr's diagnosis of the condition of England from the point of view of reform, and illustrate his assumption of the joint responsibility of church and magistrate for the common weal.

Cranmer's 21 July sermon was directed principally against the eastern rebels. It did not respond to western grievances over liturgical innovation. He excoriated the papistry of the western rebels in a later address at St Paul's on 10 August, after their military defeat. The earlier sermon, on the other hand, was part of a series of measures taken to engage with the leaders of the eastern camps from a position of strength, while recognising their sympathy for reform. Martyr's work probably originated in some notes from Cranmer, which *inter alia* ascribed the blame for the risings on western papistry. However, like the 21 July St Paul's sermon, Martyr's drafts correspond most naturally to the needs of the situation in the east, where the government hoped to settle the rebellion without turning the commons against its programme of religious change.¹³⁶ The task was a delicate one. Faced with gravamina which reflected widespread economic concerns, presented by rebels professing their enthusiastic support for religious change, a response more nuanced than that offered to Devon and Cornwall was arguably in the interests of reform. Martyr's writings on the issue reflect this dilemma.

¹³⁴ Martyr's memorandum, known as the *Cogitationes* from an editorial heading in the Parker collection, is CCCC MS 102.509-512. The sermons are at CCCC MS 340.73-95, *Hoc luctuoso tempore*, and CCCC MS 340.115-31, *Oratione perstrinximus*. Each sermon bears an editorial heading on the first folio. The first, in Parker's hand, somewhat misleadingly records 'petrus martir manu propria in seditione Devonensium'; a further note in Parker's red crayon on the opposite page records his possession of an English version. The heading to *Oratione perstrinximus* is in an unknown hand, and simply states 'Contra seditionum'. In fact, the two sermons are not distinct: the first analyses the causes of the rebellions, while the second is an extended peroration on the necessity of repentance. The Parker Library catalogue incorrectly ascribes the intervening document in the collection, Ochino's *Dialogus regis et populi* (MS 340.97-108), to Martyr: M.R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), II, 173. The Parker Library collection also includes Cranmer's English redaction of Martyr's sermons, in a scribal hand with marginal notes by the archbishop: *A sermon concerning the time of rebellion*, CCCC 102.409-82. An editorial comment states that it derives from Martyr's Latin drafts; *ibid*, 410. It is printed in Cox, 2, 190-202. Wriothsesley's account of its delivery confirms that the Parker Library texts formed its basis; Charles Wriothsesley, *A Chronicle of England During the Reigns of the Tudors, from 1485 to 1559*, ed. W.D. Hamilton (London: Camden Society, 1877), 16-18.

¹³⁵ Vinay, 203-251.

¹³⁶ MacCulloch (1996), 434-36.

The relationship between the *Cogitationes* and the two sermons is indirect. The former, as its editorial title suggests, is more a series of reflections than a systematic treatment. It has none of the characteristic order of his published common places. Its principal purpose, however, is clear: to summarise the grounds on which popular risings are illegitimate. A number of topics are briefly covered, beginning with observations on the nature of the relationship between both magistrate and people, and rich and poor, envisaged by Scripture. Thus rulers, even when unjust, are to be respected. The model for this relationship is found in both Old and New Testaments. In particular, Jeremiah urged the people of Israel to pray for their oppressor Nebuchadnezzar, and Christ endorsed giving the magistrate his due. Submission to the divinely-instituted authorities is hence the duty of the Christian subject. Further, economic inequality is no justification for rebellion, since differences in wealth have divine sanction. Finally, sedition contravenes the apostolic injunction to work and to look after one's own as well as representing the repudiation of this divine ordering of society.¹³⁷ The scripturally-approved response to injustice is patient prayer, rather than rebellion, as the example of the Hebrews in Egypt demonstrates.¹³⁸

The repudiation of rebellion as a means of redress does not, however, vindicate the status quo and exculpate the authorities in church and state. Martyr does not shrink from observing that the risings reveal the failure of both church and magistrate to exercise their respective ministries. His attention falls in particular on their failure to exercise discipline in both church and state. The church's pastors have failed to warn and correct sin, while vices have been left unpunished by the magistrate. Their two roles are complementary. Martyr expects that the need for such discipline will be more

¹³⁷ CCCC 102.509; 102.511-12: Non est solida laus neque habenda est illustris industria, ne seditiosi falso sibi persuadent, si pauper divitis personam sibi imponat vel ut dives pauperem premat. Vivimus hic ut in teatro, nec aliud ab uno quoque nostrum requiritur, nisi ut impositam sibi ab ipso deo personam bene gerat atque sustineat. Dum pauperes volunt occupare divitum locum, nil sane aliud conantur, quod ut dei providentiam arguant. Atque impudentes et verecundi sunt, ut eum arguere velint, imprudentis administrationis, quod se pauperes, illos vero divites esse voluerit.

¹³⁸ CCCC 102.510: Hebrei cum adeo in egypto essent oppressi ut nil amplius eis deesset ad summam miseriam arma contra Pharaonem non moverunt, sed patienti animo, atque longanimi tollerantia Domini auxilium expectaverunt, quod et quotidianis et ardentissimis precibus implorabant. Nec frustra nam qui nomen domini invocat salutem consequitur. Hanc virtutem israelitarum maximam, maxime nostri debuerunt imitari.

readily accepted as a consequence of the stirs.¹³⁹ Further, although the actions of the *seditiones* in rising against the wealthy and powerful are sinful, the rebellions also represent the judgment of God on economic exploitation of the poor by a greedy land-owning class.¹⁴⁰

Therefore, though sedition represents rebellion against the divine ordering of society even in the case of injustice, as well as a repudiation of the scriptural injunctions to peace among Christians, Martyr recognises the need to respond to the risings with more than condemnation.¹⁴¹ At the end of the *Cogitationes* he abruptly and briefly sums up the three causes of the English risings, and suggests how they should be addressed. The first is 'the change of religion'. The response to this, he specifies, is teaching (*doctrina*). The second cause is the oppression of the poor, which should be firmly dealt with by legislation. The third cause is popular hatred of the powerful. Public discipline is the means of correcting this social disharmony.¹⁴²

Although in the two sermons Martyr drops the suggestion that the alterations to religion are one of the causes of the revolts, the analysis and prescription of the *Cogitationes* form their basis. The note of national culpability for the disturbances, and their status as a divine judgment, is both maintained and developed. Sedition is unequivocally condemned, but responsibility for its outbreak is laid at the door of the whole nation, including nobles, church, and magistrate. Similarly, Martyr's proposed remedy, heartfelt repentance towards God, is universally necessary: it is the theological counterpart of a consistent emphasis on rebellion as divine judgment on a nation insincere in its embrace of true religion. Indeed, in the second sermon, Martyr scarcely distinguishes between the rebels and the authorities in his appeals for repentance. They are addressed jointly as *fratres charissimi*.

The first sermon, *Hoc luctuoso tempore*, identifies three main causes of the troubles:

¹³⁹ CCCC102.510: Mali huius bona pars, inde provenit, quod pastores non vigilant, neque in suis ecclesiis, quod nam agatur cognoscere student, neminem monent, neminem corrigunt, satisque putant ob id se excusari, quod nolint qui eorum curae sunt commissi, ab illis reprehendi, quasi aliorum peccata, si nos ipsi transgrediamur eluant, quod nostra culpa admissum fuerit. Magistratus item negligentia, in vitiis castigandis, non modica fuit huius infortunii causa.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*

¹⁴¹ CCCC102.510: Epistola quam scripsit Apostolus ad Rom, quae ut prudens ita etiam multi consilii christiani est, docet ut pax inter pios habeatur et conservetur domino potissimum.

¹⁴² CCCC 102.512: Seditionum istarum, tres principuae causae possunt assignari, una est religionum mutatio, altera pauperum nimia oppressio tertia vero hominum robustorum otium. Adversus ista pugnandum est, contra primum doctrina, adversus alterum bonis legibus quae non vani et absque fructu scribantur. In otiosos autem politica disciplina severiter animadvertat .

official toleration of sin, the avaricious attitudes of high and low alike, and the nation's failure to teach and live by the word of God. On account of the former, the rebellions constitute God's punishment of the civil power. The rulers of the nation have been negligent in their office and sedition is the consequence. The 'stirs', however, are also his means of restoring proper magisterial use of the sword to punish wrong and restrain evil.¹⁴³ England's situation is comparable to that of Israel when its leaders, specifically Eli and David, failed to deal with sin in their own families: the whole nation suffered catastrophe as a consequence.¹⁴⁴

The charge of greed is laid against both nobles and rebels. In seeking to enrich themselves, and in the case of the rebels to dispossess others, both display contempt for divine generosity and a culpable lack of contentment. Whereas Christ and his disciples forswore wealth, England is interested in little else. Such avarice, Martyr explains, is opposed to the gospel since it is so attached to the trifles of this world.¹⁴⁵ The sermon closes with a lengthy explanation that, as the history of both Israel and the church shows, calamity follows when a people departs from the word of God. England's distress is God's judgment on a land which has been hypocritical in its commitment to true religion.¹⁴⁶ Martyr supplements examples from the history of Israel and the early church with the contemporary instance of the Peasants' War in Germany.¹⁴⁷

In *Oratione perstrinximus*, the second sermon, Martyr's style is reminiscent of his common place approach. His purpose now is to urge the nation to repentance, and the

¹⁴³ CCCC MS 340.75-76: Hic deus bene obsecro nobis ignoscas plus aequo remissi fuimus, permulta dissimulavimus. In asserenda religione segnes, in ulciscendis blasphemiiis, in tollendis adulteriis, compescendis rapinis, reprimendis falsis rumoribus, pernitiis detractationibus pervestigandis, priusquam me tempus deficeret quam omnia vitia recensuerim, quae iubemur a deo tollere e medio populi sui, et crudeli misericordia, saevaue patientia, illa diu inulcta pertulimus. [.....] Et cum hoc sensu deficeremus adfuit seditionum poena qua erudiremur, nam omnes in praesentiam ni lapides et stipites omnino simus dolorem immensum capimus, et per tristitia ut propheta loquit immeridie sol nobis obscurant, et lux quamvis praesens in tenebras vertitur.

¹⁴⁴ CCCC MS 340.77-78: Heli fuit indulgens nimirum suis liberis cum in deum peccarent, sed sua illa nimia lenitate sibi, filiis, et universo paene israeli summam calamitatem et exitium peperit.

¹⁴⁵ CCCC MS 340.79-88

¹⁴⁶ CCCC MS, 340.93; Quae tamen iam dixi idcirco volui commemorasse, ut seditiones et turbas istas quas modo patimur, agnoscamus esse manum dei, provocemurque ad solidam veramque poenitentiam. Et evangelium Christi, quod per dei misericordiam, et nostri magistratus pietatem, passim nobis affertur et inculcatur non fecte neque per hypocrisam recipiamus.

¹⁴⁷ CCCC MS, 340.90-95.

sermon amounts to an exposition of *poenitentia*. This, he explains, was the substance of the preaching of John the Baptist as well as of Christ's commission to the apostles. Commenting first on its Hebrew and Greek biblical vocabulary, Martyr proceeds to examine the practice of repentance in both Old and New Testaments.¹⁴⁸ After a brief recapitulation of the causes of the 1549 rebellions, the sermon becomes an extended exhortation on the necessity, means and fruits of repentance.

Particular attention is given to the means by which repentance and its fruits are to be encouraged. The assiduous preaching and teaching of Scripture, Martyr emphasises, are critical. The pressing need is for the plain preaching of the law and gospel. This has two functions. First, it reveals both the need for repentance and the reality of forgiveness. Second, it discloses the pattern of Christian discipleship. Martyr noticeably seizes the opportunity to recommend catechetical teaching as a vital means to inculcate the main heads of religion. Attendance at church for sermons and catechising should be enforced by the Christian magistrate as well as church leaders.¹⁴⁹ The disciplinary dimension also receives attention. If sin is to be dealt with, repentance encouraged, and the church protected from bad examples and corruption, both *correctio fraterna* and excommunication are essential. Moreover, if such discipline is to be effective, the pastors will need help from *seniores* among the laity, such as Moses had enjoyed in exercising judgment over Israel.¹⁵⁰ (There are clear parallels with the treatment of discipline in the 1551 Corinthians commentary.) Further, the church's work in enabling and encouraging repentance required a complementary effort on the part of the magistrate in both punishing wrong and encouraging virtue.¹⁵¹

Martyr was not the only writer to whom Cranmer turned for counsel and resources in the crisis of 1549: the Parker Library collection itself also includes Martin Bucer's *cogitationes* on sedition.¹⁵² Nevertheless, Cranmer's extensive use of Martyr's work in the pivotal 21 July St Paul's sermon is striking evidence of their theological convergence. This *Sermon concerning the time of rebellion* is heavily dependent on Martyr's drafts, and

¹⁴⁸ CCCC 340.116-20.

¹⁴⁹ CCCC MS, 340.125-26.

¹⁵⁰ CCCC MS, 340.127-28: Haec minus immo omnium maxime inseruit poenitentiae disciplina evangelica, qua saepius admoniti et contumacia atque animi obstinatione sese in peccatis obfirmantes, tandem ab ecclesia excommunicantur, ut dum se ab omnibus piis evitari tanquam impuros conspiciunt resipiscant, ut alii tantae severitatis exemplo sibi magis a peccatis temperent, utque christi grex quem sibi suo sanguine acquisivit impiorum contagio non inficiatur et infectus male pereat.

¹⁵¹ CCCC MS, 340.128.

¹⁵² CCCC MS 102.513-523.

draws on no other obvious source apart from Cranmer's own learning. Nevertheless, its appropriation of Martyr's work is selective, not least over his prescription for the reform of the church's ministry. His recommendations for a more whole-hearted programme of Christian teaching, and for the revival of ecclesiastical discipline, may have enjoyed Cranmer's private sympathies. Yet the archbishop chose to omit all mention of such reform from his own sermon, which accordingly omits most of Martyr's five pages of exposition of the church's role in fostering repentance.¹⁵³ No doubt political considerations, as well as the need to condense two Latin sermons into one English version, played a part in this decision. But despite their agreement, Cranmer's judgment of the need of the hour diverged from Martyr's on this point. He agreed that the rebellions were God's judgment on a land careless of its allegiance to the gospel, and that national repentance was the only route to safety.¹⁵⁴ However, he was not ready to concur publicly with Martyr's conclusion that they also required further reform of the church's ministry of word and discipline.

Order under threat II: the Hooper crisis

The 1549 'stirs' shook the Edwardian regime from without, inaugurating the more unsettled political environment of the second half of the reign. The nomination of John Hooper to the see of Gloucester in April 1550 unexpectedly triggered a further threat to England's new order. Unlike 1549, the crisis raised some unsettling ecclesiological issues. It arose from within the evangelical establishment, challenging the authority of the privy council, acting in the king's name and with parliamentary backing, over ecclesiastical affairs. Martyr was drawn into the crisis as an intimate of many of the antagonists, and as a scholar to whom the parties turned in the hope of finding a theological resolution. His intervention on the side of the government helped secure Hooper's ultimate submission, but left unresolved two latent questions: first, whether the degree to which the church was revealed to be subordinate to the magistrate was compatible with even moderate reformers' aspirations for its ministry; and, second, whether dissent over the ordering of ecclesiastical externals was liable to be construed as sedition.

Recently returned from self-imposed continental exile, Hooper was an able preacher

¹⁵³ Cox II, 200-02; CCCC MSS. 102.485-99; 340.123-28.

¹⁵⁴ Cox II, 25-43. Null observes that Cranmer's version sharpens Martyr's description of judgment as God's means of provoking the elect to repentance; Null (2000), 233.

and determined advocate of reform with a preference for Zürich's liturgical simplicity and confessional stance. Chosen to deliver the 1550 Lenten court sermons alongside John Ponet, he took the opportunity to mount an outspoken attack on the newly-published Ordinal. Two aspects especially drew his fire. He criticised its requirement for ordinands to wear vestments as contrary to the sufficiency of Scripture. Such robes were more the garb of Aaron than of Christian ministers. He also objected to the invocation of the saints in the oath of supremacy. The challenge was provocative and unwelcome, but Cranmer's attempt to see Hooper's temerity swiftly reproved by the privy council backfired. For reasons which remain unclear, it chose rather to exonerate him and, supported by Dudley, appointment to Gloucester followed quickly.¹⁵⁵ However, any hopes that preoccupation with his new charge would mollify Hooper's attitude were quickly extinguished. Rather, he redoubled his attack, refusing to accept the appointment if he was required to wear the prescribed episcopal garments and swear the oath, and inaugurating a controversy which dragged on for nearly a year, until his final submission to the council's will, from the ignominy of the Fleet prison, on 15 February 1551.¹⁵⁶

During a traumatic year for the Edwardian church and evangelical unity, Hooper found himself increasingly isolated, partly as a consequence of political events in the body politic, partly as a result of his own intransigence. Initially, the wind which had procured his initial vindication seemed set in his favour. The oath issue was resolved by royal *fiat* at an early stage and at little lasting cost.¹⁵⁷ However, when later in the summer the vestments dispute came to pit Hooper against both Cranmer and Ridley, the wind gradually shifted against him. The council eventually sided with Canterbury and London rather than Gloucester, and Hooper's ultimate defeat formally represented the vindication of the church's freedom to insist on uniformity on 'matters indifferent' such as vestments and ceremonies. Exemptions would not be made for an individual's conscience over such questions.

To this clarification, Peter Martyr, in parallel with Bucer, made a clear contribution.

¹⁵⁵ Loades (1996), 175.

¹⁵⁶ The most complete account of the crisis, together with its Elizabethan sequel, and generally reliable though with a slant towards Hooper which occasionally underplays the loyalty of Martyr and Bucer to Cranmer, is J.H. Primus, *The Vestments Controversy* (Kampen: Kok, 1960); unless otherwise mentioned, details of the controversy's course are derived from Primus, supplemented by MacCulloch (1996, 1999); also of value, but marred by its misunderstanding of the political situation, is John Opie, 'The Anglicizing of John Hooper', *ARG* 59 (1968), 150-77.

¹⁵⁷ John ab Ulmis to Bullinger, 22 Aug 1550, *OL* II, 415-16, *ET* 274-75.

Both sides in the debate sought their support, and their correspondence suggests coordination in their response, particularly in the later stages of the controversy. In October 1550, Hooper sent a summary of his argument against Ridley to Martyr in the hope of enlisting his support. At Hooper's request, the document was then forwarded to Bucer with the same request. Both replied within a few days of each other in similar, and to Hooper, disappointing, vein. Further, in carefully phrased letters of support for the government towards the end of 1550, both Martyr and Bucer were to endorse the priority of obedience to lawful authority over personal conscience, where 'order and decency' was at stake.¹⁵⁸

However, though Martyr's contribution is normally equated with Bucer's, his involvement began earlier and appears to have been more extensive. It was not until towards the end of 1550 that Bucer was consulted by Laski, Hooper, William Bill and finally by Cranmer himself, and his replies to their enquiries constitute his principal contribution to the debate. On the other hand, Martyr's engagement originated soon after the crisis erupted. His correspondence reflects the changing fortunes of Hooper almost from the beginning of the crisis, and suggests that despite his friendship with the increasingly beleaguered preacher, ultimately he was less sympathetic to his predicament than Bucer.

Initially, it had seemed that his reservations over vestments would not prove an insuperable obstacle to Hooper's consecration. A critical date was 15 May 1550, Ascension Day, when the council seems to have accommodated Hooper's scruples. Everyone assumed that consecration would follow. In a letter to Bullinger from Oxford on 1 June, Martyr welcomes Hooper's appointment and refers obliquely to the overcoming of problems: 'By what means he was induced to accept a bishopric, I would relate at large, were I not wholly assured that from his respect towards you he would write'. He hopes to see the new bishop on his journey to Gloucester.¹⁵⁹

However, Martyr's optimism proved premature. Hooper wrote to Bullinger on 29 June

¹⁵⁸Hooper to Bucer, 17 Oct 1550, BL Add MS 28571, fols 23-26, Gorham 185-86; Martyr to Hooper, 4 Nov 1550, BL Add MS 28571 fols 35-39, Gorham 187ff; Martyr to Bucer, 11 Nov 1550, Gorham 196-98.

¹⁵⁹ Christopher Hales to Rodolph Gualter, *OL* I, 187, *ET*, 123-24; Martyr to Bullinger, 1 June 1550, *OL* II, 482, *ET*, 320-21; Hooper's own account of this incident is given in his letter to Bullinger, 29 Jun 1550, *OL* I, 87, *ET*, 55-56; at this point he believes that the council, after interrogating him at some length, had agreed a solution which 'set me clear from all defilement of superstition and from the imposition of the oath.' Loades (1996), 175, attributes this result to the prevailing of Dudley's influence over Cranmer's in the council.

in the expectation of his imminent assumption of office, and letters patent for his appointment were issued on 3 July. But by this time the accommodation reached with the council was beginning to unravel, as one of Martyr's surviving letters indicates.¹⁶⁰ On 1 July he had responded to an unnamed but evidently eminent friend who had asked for his opinion on the vestments question. This was his first known intervention in the controversy, and is also the first indication that all was not well.¹⁶¹

This letter heralds the position that Martyr was to advocate throughout the debate. Vestments, he observes, are matters indifferent, neither good nor bad in themselves. The desirability of doing everything in church with the utmost simplicity means that they ought to be abolished. Their removal is particularly desirable on the grounds that those who defend their use most tenaciously are those whose ministry is devoid of genuine worth. However, he hints at caution over the timing of abolition: it should take place 'when it can be conveniently done'. In this light, his closing remark may reflect his apprehension of the damage which Hooper's intemperance already risked: 'But, if we must yield to anger, there would be no end to complaints'.¹⁶²

The contribution of this letter to the crisis is intriguing. Cranmer's initial enthusiasm for Hooper had long cooled. It was apparently Dudley, who never showed the theological acumen of his predecessor but had perhaps sensed the sympathy of the adolescent king for reforming zeal, who persuaded the council to accommodate the bishop-elect's scruples in May. The request for Martyr's counsel may represent part of an attempt of some in Cranmer's confidence to prepare the ground to reopen the issue. Whether or not the request for Martyr's judgment came from Cranmer's circle - Anderson plausibly suggests that Sir John Cheke was the correspondent - the letter does indicate that the hiatus over Hooper's appointment had triggered a wider discussion over vestments and their adiaphoristic status.¹⁶³ Correspondence from the previous year shows that Cranmer, Bucer and Martyr were already aware of the contemporary controversy over *adiaphora* between Melancthon and Matthias Flacius Illyricus, and that this included

¹⁶⁰ OL I, 87, ET, 55.

¹⁶¹ Martyr to a Certain Friend, 1 July 1550, Gorham, 161-62; LC 1085.

¹⁶² Gorham, 162.

¹⁶³ Donnelly & Kingdon (1980), 164; Martyr refers to this request for advice 'a quodam nobili' in his letter to Bucer of 25th October, printed in Hopf, 162-164, indicating that his counsel was sought at least semi-officially; in February 1551, writing to Bucer on the revision of the Prayer Book, Martyr was to comment on Cheke's open and earnest desire for simplicity; he was a member of the 'evangelical establishment' for whom Martyr clearly had a high regard; Gorham, 232.

discussion of the place of vestments.¹⁶⁴

The Council's 15 May concession to Hooper's objection had been conditional on his conceding that vestments were indifferent and could be therefore legitimately be worn by others, though he was to be exempt.¹⁶⁵ At the end of June, Cranmer consecrated John Ponet as Bishop of Rochester according to the new ordinal, wearing the prescribed garments.¹⁶⁶ However, Hooper then appears to have played into the hands of his opponents, by shifting his ground towards a more restrictive definition of *adiaphora*, similar to that of Flacius. The new crisis was openly triggered by his novel insistence that vestments were not adiaphorous. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, probably abetted by Laski, he deliberately painted himself into a corner on this issue. Ridley on the other hand, to whom Cranmer had committed Hooper's consecration, stuck to the contention that vestments were matters indifferent, and that as such, the regime had authority to insist on conformity in such issues, in the interests of order. Hooper's interpretation of *adiaphora* excluded vestments and was also unsympathetic to Ridley's understanding of the legitimacy of compulsion.

Martyr's interventions in the controversy combine a strong sympathy for the goal of removing vestments with an endorsement both of their adiaphorous nature and of the regime's right to legislate over such matters. He is also impatient with Hooper for precipitating a crisis over an issue of minor importance. His developed views are seen primarily in a letter to Bucer of 25 October 1550, and his reply to Hooper of 4 November. Both arise from Hooper's request for comments on his case. In the first, Martyr refers to a recent disputation in Oxford on whether 'Aaronical ceremonies' could be retained in the church, indicating the extent of interest in the case, and echoing Hooper's own description of vestments. He distinguishes between Old Testament 'sacramental' ceremonies which prefigured Christ and which therefore cannot be now retained in the church, and actions and rites which contribute to the decorum of the ministers or are otherwise edifying. Over the latter, the church is free to decide its

¹⁶⁴ Martyr to Bucer, Aug 1549, Gorham, 97-98; Melancthon to Bucer, 18 Dec 1549, Gorham, 119-120. On the controversy between the gnesio-Lutheran Flacius and Melancthon, see Robert Kolb, *Confessing the Faith: Reformers Define the Church, 1530-1580* (St Louis: Concordia, 1991), 73-80. On the debate over adiaphora in England, see Bernard J. Verkamp, *The Indifferent Mean: Adiaphorism in the English Reformation to 1554* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1977); also Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), 71-72.

¹⁶⁵ Primus, 11.

¹⁶⁶ MacCulloch 1996, 473.

policy; its criteria are whether a provision is useful or convenient.¹⁶⁷ The letter to Hooper has the same potentially positive attitude to non-sacramental rites of the Old Testament. Martyr points out that Old Testament practices such as tithing and feast days are widespread in the church, despite their lack of explicit New Testament sanction. Hooper's argument that all vestiges of the 'old law' are to be abolished is therefore fallacious.¹⁶⁸

The substance of Martyr's argument in both these letters can be briefly summarised. In both, he endorses the simplicity of Strasbourg's practice, familiar to Hooper as well as to Bucer, and expresses the desire to see England adopt the same practice on ministerial dress.¹⁶⁹ However, he differs from Hooper on the grounds for the abolition of vestments. Although simplicity is most compatible with the practice of the apostolic church, vestments themselves are not precluded by the Word of God, as Hooper claimed, but clearly fall into the category of *adiaphora*. Hooper is mistaken to claim that they are inadmissible because among other considerations they are Aaronical and papistical.¹⁷⁰ The fulfilment of the Old Testament sacraments in the coming of Christ does not require the abrogation of all of the Law's provisions:

Nonetheless, there were some rites there so set up that, while they cannot technically be called sacraments, they contributed to decorum, order and a certain suitability which I think could be brought back and retained as congruent with the light of nature and bringing some advantage to us.¹⁷¹

Martyr also rejects Hooper's contention that vestments may not be used on the grounds that they were a papal invention. Pointing out that the church had often turned to its service the buildings, money and literature of even pagan religion, he argues that vestments are neither exclusively papal in origin nor, even on that account, contaminated beyond rescue. To the godly, whatever their former misuse, they can have a holy use. Citing Titus 1.15 and I Timothy 4.4 in qualification of Hooper's interpretation of Romans 14.23, Martyr concludes :

¹⁶⁷ Martyr to Bucer, Oct 25 1550, Hopf, 162.

¹⁶⁸ Martyr to Hooper, Nov 4 1550, LC 1086-87, PML 5: 105; LC II.15.6-28 conveniently gathers Martyr's comments on the function and applicability of Old Testament law under the new covenant, mostly from his commentary on the epistle to the Romans, on which he was lecturing in the autumn of 1550.

¹⁶⁹ LC 1086, PML 5: 102-3, Hopf, 162.

¹⁷⁰ See Primus, 17-29, as qualified by Verkamp, 71-79, for a full examination of Hooper's position in his paper of 3 Oct 1550.

¹⁷¹ LC 1087, PML 5: 105.

It is enough to know generally by faith that things indifferent cannot contaminate those who act with a pure and sincere mind and conscience.¹⁷²

Their retention or abolition is accordingly a question not of obedience to Scripture, but of judgment over their aptness. In the letter to Bucer, Martyr outlines the two principles from I Corinthians which should govern the use of *adiaphora*: they should both be edifying and serve 'order'. In Martyr's judgment, the use of vestments does not meet these criteria.¹⁷³ In his letter to Hooper, however, though he repeats his view that vestments do not of themselves edify, he significantly adds that the church does have liberty to signify something by her actions and ceremonies. Moreover, the church's addition of matters indifferent to the provisions of Scripture is not tyrannical, as Hooper had argued.¹⁷⁴

Martyr thus sympathised with Hooper's desire to remove vestments, but disagreed with his arguments, and contended that the church had authority to prescribe on matters indifferent. In his letter to the bishop-elect, a startling phrase refers to those in the crisis who are insisting on vestments as 'our opponents'.¹⁷⁵ Further, this sympathy is reflected on Hooper's side in his continued willingness to listen to Martyr's arguments. Where Cranmer and others were singularly unable to prevail upon Hooper to relent, he was at one critical moment on the brink of yielding to Martyr's personal entreaty.¹⁷⁶

However, their theological differences were critical. Martyr's contention that vestments are *adiaphorous* meant that the vestments issue was subordinate to the wider interests of the reform of the English church. The authorities in the church could legitimately insist on ministerial compliance. Further, throughout his correspondence on the issue Martyr criticises Hooper's resistance as hindering rather than furthering the cause of reform. Recognising that the political circumstances for the abolition of vestments are not propitious, Martyr consistently argues for their toleration, in the interests of preserving peace and pursuing the more strategic goals of thoroughly establishing true

¹⁷² LC 1088, PML 5: 109.

¹⁷³ Hopf 163: In ista quaestione ut paucis dicam, id me tantum non nihil movet, quod Paulum video priori ad Cor circa finem, duo potissimum spectare in ritibus vel traditionibus ecclesiae. Primum est, ut aedificet, alterum ut servetur *εὐταξία* et in his vestibus, nil mihi se offert, quod ut ad *εὐταξίαν* aedificatur solide faciat.

¹⁷⁴ LC 1087-88, PML 5: 107-109.

¹⁷⁵ LC 1088, PML 5: 108.

¹⁷⁶ Martyr to Bucer, Feb 1551, Gorham, 233.

religion in England. In the letter to Bucer, Martyr states that the abolition of '*ceremonias . . . parum utiles*' would have been better advanced if Hooper had taken up his see and proceeded to set a positive example of a reforming bishop.¹⁷⁷ The strife over the issue has been damaging to the cause of reform. He expresses the same apprehension in the letter to Hooper: such controversy hinders reform. The first step should be to allow the gospel to send down deep roots. Once this has happened the removal of 'superfluous items' will be easier. Preaching against matters indifferent, on the other hand, is likely to alienate people and make the task of reform more difficult. He is anxious that Hooper does not undermine his own ministry by his 'immoderate and excessively bitter sermons'. For the sake of the wider cause, it is advisable to tolerate what cannot be changed in these matters.¹⁷⁸

On the question of magisterial authority to legislate on matters indifferent, Martyr's correspondence is silent, though it was fundamental to Ridley's case against Hooper. The bishop of London argued that the liberty of the church included the ability to institute rites and ceremonies and hence to require their observance. His assumption was that such ecclesiastical legislation was legitimately the province of the Edwardian regime. Unreasonable resistance was evidence of a disordered disposition.¹⁷⁹ Martyr stood aside from this aspect of the debate. After departing from England, he was to comment on the church's power to make ecclesiastical laws in his Zürich lectures on the books of Samuel, published posthumously. Here he would make a sharp distinction between ecclesiastical and civil laws.¹⁸⁰ But in the Hooper affair, and although Cranmer was specifically to enquire of Bucer over the legitimacy of magisterial institution, his observations on this aspect are almost all tangential to his main concerns. In a guarded letter to Bullinger towards the end of the affair, in which he laments that the main beneficiaries of the disagreement are the papists, Martyr reports his own view that vestments should be abolished. On the question of authority, he confined himself to observing that,

¹⁷⁷ Hopf, 163-4: consilium meum in negotio Hopperi erat, ut episcopatum sibi oblatum ab initio suscepisset, ad suam ecclesiam inisset, eamque concionibus, disciplina, et diligenti cura sic instituisset, ut omnibus aliis dioecibus exemplo haberetur, at nihil horum perfectum est, contentio eo exarsit, ut posthac non facile sperem, Dominum Londinensem, Rssm Cantuariensem adducendos, ut has ceremonias fortasse parum utiles aboleri sint, cum se et illos tantopere opposuerit, quod si ad tantam contentionem ventum non esset, aliquid potuisset fortasse impetrari.

¹⁷⁸ LC 1086, 1087, PML 5: 103-4, 106.

¹⁷⁹ Primus, 23-24.

¹⁸⁰ CP IV.4.1-5, 41-44.

it is very offensive to the king's councillors, and to very many others, both among the nobility and commonalty, that a decree publicly received, and confirmed by the authority of the kingdom, should be found fault with as ungodly, and condemned as though it were at variance with the sacred writings.¹⁸¹

If Martyr's sympathies were with this opinion, he did not choose to signal them to Bullinger, and his other writings on the affair do not lend vigorous support to this argument of Hooper's opponents. On the other hand, he does not question their assumption or encourage Hooper in his challenge to the authority of the magistrate to exercise the power to legislate on ecclesiastical *adiaphora*.¹⁸² Indeed, the position towards which Hooper at this point leant, probably encouraged by Laski and the freedom recently granted to the London Stranger Church, was not one with which Martyr had sympathy, either politically or theologically. In the circumstances of England, the progress of reform still depended heavily on the close co-operation of church and state, and the distinction between the two was increasingly invisible. It is also salutary to recall that at the time no one expected the situation in 1550 to endure: whether or not vestments were agreed to be adiaphorous, both Martyr and Bucer were genuinely optimistic that the next stage of liturgical reform would see further progress towards simplicity or abolition. In Martyr's eyes, Hooper's intemperance was unnecessary, since further reform was on the way.¹⁸³

The authority of the regime to impose conformity on matters indifferent was thus the underlying assumption of Martyr's counsel. Despite agreeing on the desirability of the abolition of vestments, he would not support Hooper's unilateral opposition: as a thing indifferent, it was subject to the obligation of I Corinthians 14.40, that all things be done 'in a fitting and orderly way'. Responsibility for establishing this decorum lay with the authorities. Hooper's obstinacy was a challenge to this principle and, in a polity so recently threatened by the breakdown of civil order, could only end in disaster for its author, a point which Martyr attempted to impress on his friend during his

¹⁸¹ Martyr to Bullinger, 28 Jan 1551, *OL* II, 487, *ET*, 325.

¹⁸² *Primus*, 29-30.

¹⁸³ Martyr to Bullinger, 28 Jan 1551, *OL* II, 487-8, *ET*, 325-26; Martyr here reports that the evangelical bishops agree that vestments are a matter of indifference; he confidently expects greater simplicity in the future; cf also John ab Ulmis to Bullinger 31 Dec 1550, *OL* II, 425-26, *ET*, 279-80, citing Martyr as the source of his intelligence: The archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London recommend equally with [Hooper] the entire abolition of the habits; but they consider that it ought to be effected by the general consent of the whole kingdom, and not by the random authority of an individual, or that of the council only.

confinement at Lambeth.¹⁸⁴

Martyr's was not the decisive voice in the resolution of the Hooper affair. Nevertheless, despite the evangelical expectation that the days of vestments were numbered, the issue at stake was more than a question of timetable, and Martyr's contribution was significant. The eagerness of both sides in the dispute to secure the support of Martyr and Bucer indicates the importance attached to theological legitimacy. As the regime's response to the rebellions of 1549 had shown, scriptural defensibility was expected of the government's position. For Hooper, seeking freedom to exercise his ministry according to the principles he had come to adopt in exile, the unqualified support of the leading foreign theologians in England would have been a coup. In the case of the regime, the advice of Martyr and Bucer clearly bolstered its confidence in resisting Hooper. The resolution of the dispute represented a defeat not only for Hooper's restricted definition of matters indifferent, but also a repudiation of his view of the church. Where the church legislated on matters indifferent, conformity could be required in the interests of order from all, including those whose consciences were offended.

Summary

This chapter has outlined Martyr's involvement with the formal reform of the church in Edwardian England, illustrating not only his keen interest in the process but also his intimate involvement at many of its key moments. It highlights both the extent and limits of his influence. The regime, represented by Cranmer, clearly valued Martyr's counsel, turning to him more frequently than to any other figure as a resident representative of continental evangelical scholarship. However, neither the formal instruments of reform nor the regime's response to the crises which threatened its progress can be said to reflect very accurately Martyr's own ecclesiological emphases. Regarding the provision of an effective pastoral ministry, for example, we have noted his frustration with the regime's unwillingness to foster healthy preaching. Doctrinally, while he appears to have been satisfied with the 1552 *Prayer Book*, he would not have recognised the ecclesiology of the *Forty-Two Articles* as demonstrably his own. Its

¹⁸⁴ Martyr to Bucer, Feb 1551, Gorham, 233. One of Martyr's few differences of emphasis with Bucer on this question related to the effect of the crisis on evangelical unity. As we have noted, Martyr laments the harm done by the divisions; Bucer, on the other hand, argued that the contention over vestments was a further reason for their removal. Cf Primus, 50-51.

attenuated definitions were far from his carefully comprehensive formulations, while the retention of a two-mark doctrine is the clearest indication that priorities other than Martyr's governed Cranmer's composition. In the documents which were to give the church its liturgical and doctrinal foundations for centuries to come, Martyr's ecclesiological distinctives are only faintly to be discerned.

Thus if Martyr entertained hopes that England would look to him and Bucer for its *Kirchenordnung*, some disappointment was inevitable. Though he was to seek Martyr's help on many occasions, and enjoy a genuine friendship with him, by 1547 Cranmer was already a theologian and politician of some maturity. He profited from the help of his foreign guests, but the reform of the church was a project for which he was already prepared and whose direction he was determined to control. Martyr was arguably most useful to him in the controversies over the eucharist, where the outcome of the struggle for a Protestant approach was most uncertain. Over other issues, the regime appropriated his insights and employed his talents where they suited it. This was particularly the case over ecclesiology. Indeed, Martyr's most influential ecclesiological contributions were made principally in response to the 1549 risings and the Hooper crisis. In both, his adherence to the interdependence of church and magistrate, and to the principle of order, lent authoritative support to the regime in dealing with critics for whose positions he had some sympathy. In the instruments of reform, however, the doctrine of the church was not a prominent point of debate, and it was not primarily for this aspect of his thought that Martyr would be remembered in England. This conclusion might well have been different if the largest project in which he was closely involved, the reform of canon law, had been implemented. It is to Martyr's involvement in this vast, but largely forgotten, enterprise that the next chapter therefore turns.

Chapter six

The Book of the Law

Introduction: 'the church that never was'

On 11 November 1551 at Westminster, eight commissioners were appointed under letters patent. Their task was momentous. They were to

carefully review, consider and ponder the corpus of ecclesiastical laws actually in use in this kingdom, or customarily used in the past, and having done that, in their place and stead to compose, make and cause to be recorded in writing, a collection, compilation and catalogue of such ecclesiastical laws as you think, on the basis of your knowledge, wisdom and judgment, ought most expediently to be in force.¹

The need for such a revision was pressing. The 1532 Submission of the Clergy had seen the English church relinquish authority over canon law to the Crown.² Henry VIII's repudiation of papal authority raised an immediate question over the continued status of the medieval canon law in England, lending added impetus to existing pressure for reform.³ It was not a minor issue: the scope of ecclesiastical jurisdiction in sixteenth-century England was wide, including all matrimonial and testamentary issues, as well as universally relevant matters of ecclesiastical obligation, notably tithes. Moreover, even before the king's assumption of the supremacy, the legal situation had been unstable. The jurisdiction of the church courts had long been under gradual assault from the common lawyers. Now the repudiation of Rome's authority cast doubt over the validity of canon law itself. There were loud calls in 1532 to strip the ecclesiastical courts of parts of their jurisdiction, and in 1535 the abolition of the faculties of canon law in the

¹ Text and ET in Gerald Bray ed., *Tudor Church Reform: The Henrician Canons of 1535 and the Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*, Church of England Record Society 8 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), 166-9 (henceforward *TCR*). The committee was to prepare a draft for the consideration of a commission of 32 members, appointed under an Act of Parliament of February 1550 (3-4 Edward VI c.11, 1549-50) which set a three-year time limit on its work. The full commission was finally named on 12 Feb 1552; there is no evidence that it ever met together, and the drafting committee was principally responsible for the surviving documents. *Ibid.*, xlv-xlvi.

² *TCR*, xvi-xvii. For a general introduction to the medieval background, see James A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law* (London: Longman, 1995).

³ Gerald Bray, ed., *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947*, Church of England Record Society 6 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998), henceforward *TAC*, xxxiv-xl.

universities confirmed the new reality: the decrees of a foreign bishop had no force in a realm where all law flowed from the king.⁴ Canon lawyers as a distinct cadre ceased to exist, and the discipline became a specialisation of the civilians.⁵

A comprehensive resolution of the relationship of the legal systems of church and crown therefore seemed essential. In 1534 Parliament accordingly established a commission made up of sixteen lay representatives and sixteen clergy to prepare a new canon law. A complete draft code was produced by 1535. However, in the event, once the supremacy had been established, the regime became cautious about implementing change and reconstituting the church's jurisdiction. Reform of the ecclesiastical legal corpus soon stalled. Despite attempts to restart the process in 1536 and 1543, the turbulence and torpor of Henry VIII's latter years meant the reign ended without further progress.⁶

The Edwardian appointment of a new commission in 1551 was thus a return to unfinished business. It was also connected with Cranmer's determination to place England in the vanguard of the Reformation. As well as addressing the need to clarify the church's legal framework, it represented a response to the continental reformers' persistent concern for church discipline, and was at least in principle an attempt to erect in England an exemplary 'church order' analogous to European counterparts.⁷ There was also a fresh contemporary impetus, generated by the reforms initiated by the papacy. The Council of Trent was engaged in a vigorous renewal of canon law. The construction of an alternative code was not only a response to England's need, but also a riposte to the reassertion of the papacy's claim to universal legislative competence. Commenting to Bullinger on his own involvement in England's project, Martyr revealed that Cranmer's aspirations were

⁴ On the scope of the church's medieval jurisdiction, and its erosion in the early sixteenth century, see Helmholz (1990), 20-35. The courts' jurisdiction over a number of disputed areas had been effectively eclipsed; official support for this development followed rather than led the trend. Kenneth Carleton, *Bishops and Reform in the English Church, 1520-1559* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001), 13.

⁵ On this, see R.H. Helmholz, 'Canon Law in post-Reformation England' in *Canon Law in Protestant Lands* ed. R.H. Helmholz (Berlin: Duncker & Humbolt, 1992), 207-11.

Helmholz observes that the abolition was matched by the creation of civil law chairs in the universities, and that as a result, canon law was retained 'in commendam' with the civil, and sustained by the practical necessity for the relevant legal expertise in the ecclesiastical courts themselves; the predominant influence in the courts throughout the sixteenth century and beyond was not common law procedure but the principles of jurisprudence in use throughout the rest of western Europe, normally known as the *ius commune*. For the medieval background of the *ius commune*, see Brundage (1995), 60-6, 96; also Manlio Bellomo, *The Common Legal Past of Europe, 1000-1800* (Washington: The Catholic University of America, 1995), xii.

⁶ MacCulloch (1996), 119-21; TCR, xxxviii-xxxix.

⁷ On Cranmer's ambitions, see MacCulloch (1996), 501-2.

ambitious:

May God therefore grant that such laws may be enacted by us, as by their godliness and holy justice may banish the Tridentine canons from the churches of Christ!⁸

However, the political fortunes of the enterprise after 1552 have obscured its contemporary significance. In its day, the effort to reform canon law in England ranked alongside the preparation of the second *Prayer Book*, and the *Forty-Two Articles*, and at its initiation even appeared to take priority over the latter. However, early in 1553, as a consequence of a catastrophic breakdown in his relations with Cranmer and his allies, Northumberland vetoed the completed code. Edward VI's death in July then hastened its historiographical disappearance: the rapprochement among the evangelical leadership as the king's health deteriorated had been too brief and frantic, preoccupied as it was with moves to secure a Protestant succession, to allow the scheme's revival. Moreover, when Protestantism was restored in 1559, canon law reform was not to be a priority for Edward's younger sister. John Foxe's attempt to revive the Edwardian proposals in 1571, publishing them in full for the first time, was still-born.⁹

The 1553 code, generally known from Foxe's title as the *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*, was a blueprint for England's Reformation church order: 'the church

⁸ Martyr to Bullinger, 8 March 1552, *OL* II, 503; *ET*, 330-1.

⁹ The consequence of the failure to create a specifically English ecclesiastical law meant that the interim provisions of the statutes ordaining revision, which authorised the inherited canon law insofar as it was consistent with statute, custom and the royal prerogative, inadvertently became the permanent framework for the exercise of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. In practice, the *ius commune* prevailed over common or statute law in the spiritual courts, as their officials and proctors retained and even developed their expertise in the traditional corpus and procedures; Helmholz (1992), 206-7, 211-220; TAC, xlii. Under Elizabeth, new ecclesiastical courts, the Court of Delegates and the Court of High Commission, were established to formalise appeals and to enforce the religious settlement. They contributed to a renewed vitality in the life of the courts, seen in a growing volume of business in the last quarter of the century; Helmholz (1990), 43-52. The relationship between canon and statute was to trouble the church in subsequent centuries, not least on the question over whether canon law was binding on the laity, though in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries this was assumed: Richard H. Helmholz, 'The Canons of 1603: The Contemporary Understanding', in *English Canon Law: Essays in Honour of Bishop Eric Kemp*, ed. N. Doe, M. Hill, and R. Ombres (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1998), 23-35. See also Gerald Bray, 'The Strange Afterlife of the *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*', *ibid.*, 36-47. For a stimulating introduction to the character of ecclesiastical jurisdiction in England, and its relationship with statute and common law, see Eric W. Kemp, *An Introduction to the Canon Law of England* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1957). A further useful summary is given in *The Canon Law of the Church of England, 1947*, Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Canon Law (London: SPCK).

that never was'.¹⁰ Its provisions reflect the theological convictions, pastoral hopes, practical concerns, and political judgments of the evangelical leadership. This chapter addresses the question of how far it adopted the ecclesiological concerns of the continental reformers, by examining its correspondence with Martyr's thought. This approach is not arbitrary. Martyr's involvement with the project was extensive. His membership of the drafting committee constituted both his closest engagement with reform in England, and also the most intimate involvement of any continental reformer with Cranmer's efforts to situate her church in the Protestant vanguard. Following a discussion of the structure and composition of the *Reformatio*, including Martyr's activity, the chapter proceeds to examine how far a number of its provisions correspond to his ecclesiology: after an initial treatment of the document's creation and its assumptions on authority in the church, particular attention is paid to the doctrinal, church order and disciplinary titles, with an extended discussion of the *Reformatio's* treatment of church discipline.

The *Reformatio*: structure, composition, character

The *Reformatio* is a unique document with no clear contemporary counterpart. It comprises fifty-five separate 'titles'. Most of them include a number of chapters, each with its own heading. This reflects the approach adopted in the 1535 revision, which in a radical simplification of the medieval inheritance numbered thirty-five titles.¹¹ Despite adopting the 1535 pattern, in both its contents and the arrangement of its titles the *Reformatio* was largely a fresh composition, though its composers were evidently aware both of canon law antecedents and of their new confessional environment.¹²

The medieval canon law which the *Reformatio* was to supersede had existed in many collections. By the end of the fifteenth century, publishers had begun to issue sets of the principal documents under the title *Corpus iuris canonici*. The principal

¹⁰ The phrase is from L.R. Sachs, 'Thomas Cranmer's *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum* of 1553 in the context of English church law from the later middle ages to the canons of 1603' (unpublished JCD dissertation, The Catholic University of America, 1982), 136.

¹¹ TCR, 1-143, has the original Latin and an ET of the 1535 canons. These are drawn from a surviving manuscript copy in the Yelverton Collection, BL Add MS 48040, fols 14^r-103^r.

¹² The *Reformatio* awaits a full scholarly examination. Brief or partial treatments are to be found in: R.W. Dixon, *History of the Church of England from the abolition of the Roman jurisdiction* (London 1878-1902), III, 350-82; Sachs (1982); Paul Ayris, 'Thomas Cranmer's Register: A record of archiepiscopal administration in diocese and province' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Cambridge, 1984), 313-61; J.C. Spalding, *The Reformation of the Ecclesiastical Laws of England, 1552* (Kirkville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1992).

components of this collection were: Gratian's *Decretum* (c1140), Gregory IX's *Decretals* (1234, normally known as the *Liber extra*), Boniface VIII's *Liber sextus* (1298), John XXII's *Clementine constitutions* (1317), the *Extravagantes* of John XXII (1325), and a miscellaneous collection of late medieval decrees known as the *Extravagantes Communes*. Further, though canon law had its own distinct identity, it existed in symbiotic interdependence with the civil law. Justinian's *Corpus iuris civilis* was accepted as a supplementary source of canon law. As a consequence, the concept of *ius commune*, the corpus and principles of law and legal process in use throughout Christendom, had taken root throughout Europe.¹³ Local variations to the canon law abounded, however, both customary and as a result of the augmenting of the general law by provincial and diocesan decrees. In England, the *Corpus iuris canonici* was supplemented by the legatine constitutions of Otto (1237) and Ottobon (1268), as well as by English provincial and synodal canons, made widely accessible in William Lyndwood's 1433 *Provinciale*.¹⁴ By comparison with these collections, and their extensive glosses, the *Reformatio* is modest in size, representing a significant pruning, amendment and codification of the medieval inheritance.

The full text of the *Reformatio* is known only from the edition edited and published by Foxe in 1571.¹⁵ His principal source was a manuscript, now lost, owned by archbishop Matthew Parker. This was either the final version of the proposed code, as presented for the approval of the House of Lords in April 1553, or a contemporary copy.¹⁶ Foxe also used and annotated an earlier manuscript draft, which survives in fine condition in the British Library as Harleian MS 426.¹⁷ Foxe's edition can reliably be assumed to correspond to the final version, rejected in 1553. It reveals the addition of eight titles to the Harleian draft, and its sequence differs

¹³ Brundage (1995), 47-60.

¹⁴ TAC, xxvi. William Lyndwood, *Provinciale, seu Constitutiones Angliae* (Oxford, 1679); ET in *Lyndwood's Provinciale*, eds. J.V. Bullard & H. Chalmer Bell (London: Faith Press, 1929). Lyndwood's work, first published in 1433, was the primary compilation of English provincial and diocesan decrees, and went through several editions in the immediate pre-Reformation period.

¹⁵ *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*, ed. John Foxe (London: John Day, 1571). This was reprinted with some corrections by Thomas Harper and Richard Hodgkinson in 1640, and by the Stationers' Company in 1641. A critical edition of the 1571 edition was published in the nineteenth century: *The reformation of the ecclesiastical law as attempted in the reigns of King Henry VIII, King Edward VI and Queen Elizabeth*, ed. E. Cardwell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1850).

¹⁶ Bray establishes an early date for the lost manuscript by analysing the differences between Harleian MS 426 and Foxe's edition, TCR, lix-lxiv. Sachs concurs with this judgment: Sachs, 81.

¹⁷ Spalding's English translation of Harleian MS 426 has now been superseded by Bray's critical edition, which records and translates the variances in the successive scribal and published versions of the text up to 1641.

significantly. However, the Harleian MS clearly represented a late stage of the drafting process: the final code incorporates most of the editorial annotations found in the manuscript, and apart from the addition of the extra eight title, other alterations are not extensive. (References to the structure of the code are to the order of Foxe's published version, unless otherwise noted.)

The arrangement of the titles of the *Reformatio* is progressive, and follows a clear plan, apart from some anomalously interpolated individual titles.¹⁸ The first six titles are concerned with doctrinal definition, including material on heresy and its punishment. Three titles then regulate marriage and divorce.¹⁹ These are followed by regulations concerning benefices and church goods, and detailed titles prescribing weekly church life and the qualifications and duties of ministers and church officers, ordained and lay. Provisions for schools and universities are next followed by rules governing tithes, visitations and probate regulations. Church discipline forms the subject of six titles, while the final twenty-two sections deal with the procedures to be followed in the ecclesiastical courts.

This catalogue indicates that the *Reformatio* was to accomplish four main purposes. Like its medieval forbears and many continental *Kirchenordnungen*, it began with a summary of doctrine. This was evidently intended to complement the *Forty-Two Articles*, though the historiographical disappearance of the *Reformatio* has obscured this. Work on the two documents had proceeded simultaneously and though the drafting of the *Reformatio*'s titles was in the hands of an official commission, while the *Articles* were produced by a less formal process, each document presupposes the other. There was also the need to provide an order regulating the ceremonies, ministry and discipline of the church, comparable to continental *Kirchenordnungen*. A third area related to the church's social jurisdiction, primarily over matrimonial and testamentary matters. Finally, the retention of the traditional system of church courts required the review, codification and republication of detailed provisions for their procedure, and their adaptation to the royal supremacy. These diverse needs of the church account for the combination in one document of clear statements of, for example, reformed sacramental doctrine alongside a traditional catalogue of 'rules of law' drawn largely from the thirteenth-century *Liber sextus*.²⁰

¹⁸ Notably R, 7, *De contionatoribus*, and R, 14, *De purgatione*.

¹⁹ The rejection of the *Reformatio* meant that the reformers' transformation of the status of marriage and their acceptance of divorce in certain circumstances found no echo in England's matrimonial law, which was to be as a result more conservative than almost all other Protestant polities. On this, see E.J. Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 67-84.

²⁰ Helmholz (1992), 206.

It is accordingly a wide-ranging document. In structure and content it signals both continuity and discontinuity with the past, a feature of Cranmer's approach.²¹ The traditional phrasing of many title headings is the most obvious example of continuity. This is particularly noticeable in the case of the procedural titles, though like the 1535 draft, the whole collection begins with the traditional heading *De summa Trinitate et fide Catholica*, as had the *Corpus iuris civilis*, the *Liber extra*, the *Extravagantes Clementinae* and Lyndwood's *Provinciale*, thus signalling both its status and the intentional replacement of medieval antecedents.²²

However, as with much else in the English Reformation, continuity with the past was accompanied by substantive change. A canon lawyer could not mistake the document as anything but a legal code, yet much of its contents signalled a deliberate break with the past. This is most obvious in the titles dealing with doctrine, the pattern of church life, and ministry. But the desire to renovate the whole canon law is evident even where continuity of content is most marked. The legal titles, for example are mostly fresh draftings in which even traditional provisions are recast.

The composition history of the *Reformatio* has been analysed by Sachs and Bray.²³ There are a number of unanswered questions about the process, beginning with the question of who were the active members of both the full commission of thirty-two and the drafting committee. Both bodies were carefully composed with, at least in principle, equal numbers from four interested constituencies. Thus, on the smaller, working group, Cranmer and Thomas Goodricke acted for the bishops. Civil lawyers were represented by Rowland Taylor and William May, and their common law colleagues by John Lucas and Richard Goodricke. Finally, alongside Richard Cox, Martyr was one of two 'divines' or doctors appointed to the committee. His

²¹ The archbishop himself was no *ingénue* in the canon law. His library, a working collection, included several sixteenth century editions of canon law, including Gratian's *Decretum*, the *Liber Sextus* and the *Decretals*. Evidence of a personal interest is confirmed by the survival in his papers of two characteristic compilations of canon law texts, dating from the 1530s and annotated in his own hand, on a number of topics, including the power of the king and pope in the church, ecclesiastical court procedure, appeals, and church goods. Paul Ayris, 'Canon Law Studies', in *Thomas Cranmer: Churchman and Scholar*, eds. Paul Ayris and David G. Selwyn (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1993), 316-22.

²² TCR, 765-6, compares the title headings of the *Reformatio* and the *Decretals* (*Liber extra*); the correlation between the headings of the legal titles in the *Liber extra*, Book Two, and the *Reformatio* is particularly striking (though care is needed in consulting this listing: the *Reformatio* titles listed here are in a few cases given in an abbreviated form). TCR, 757-63, tabulates the headings of the titles in successive collections of medieval canon law from the *Liber extra*, and including Lyndwood's *Provinciale*, through to the Henrician canons and the *Reformatio*, indicating the very substantial continuity between them.

²³ Sachs (1982), 81-5; TCR, lv-lix.

inclusion was scarcely a surprise. Arguably the theological heir of Martin Bucer, who had died in February 1551, he was now indisputably the most eminent continental Protestant scholar in England. Moreover, Strasbourg had been the crossroads not only of efforts to introduce church discipline, but also for the framing of Protestant church orders, and so although canon law was not his training, Martyr's practical experience, theological expertise, and closeness to Cranmer made him an obvious choice.²⁴

The relationship between the full commission and its drafting committee is obscure. Simler suggests that most of the work was performed by a handful of members: Walter Haddon (not formally a member of the commission), Rowland Taylor, and Martyr himself, under Cranmer's supervision. Simler's account of the commission's work is not wholly reliable, and this is almost certainly an over-simplification.²⁵ There is no evidence of the full commission meeting as a body, or of the hand of individual members of the commission beyond the drafting committee. Yet hints survive that the committee did not enjoy a free hand. Martyr himself anticipated the active involvement of members of the wider group: in March 1552, shortly after letters patent finally appointed the full commission, he reported to Bullinger the inclusion of Hooper and Laski as an encouraging feature, and connected the commission's work with the sitting of parliament and convocation.²⁶ Other observers also expected the membership of the full commission to affect its outcome. Martin Micron, in reporting the inclusion of Laski and Hooper to Bullinger, expressed his apprehension that Ridley might obstruct change. This qualified enthusiasm was shared by other leaders of the Stranger church in London: Utenhoven recognised that there were differences among the evangelical leadership, but hoped for a good outcome, if necessary through the exercise of the royal

²⁴ Simler records no legal studies in Martyr's formation, despite Padua's eminence as a school of jurisprudence. However, the surviving volumes of his library suggests that he became a collector of contemporary Roman and canon law editions and commentaries after around 1550: Donnelly (1976a), 217. Kingdon observes Martyr's extensive citation of both canon and civil law in works dating from the 1550s, notably the Judges commentary. He speculates that Martyr's interest stems from his second Strasbourg period, where he was closely associated with a number of lawyers, especially Sleidan; Kingdon (1980a), 159-72.

²⁵ Simler erroneously thought that the reform had been implemented: 'All England then enjoyed peace and tranquillity and was happy in the excellent religion and laws that were established', *Oratio*, PML 5: 38.

²⁶ Martyr to Bullinger, 8 Mar 1552, *OL* II, 503; *ET*, 330-31. The names listed in the patent rolls, dated 12 February 1552, differ slightly from the list in Edward VI's journal of 10th February, and from the provisional list drawn up by the privy council the previous October. With the exception of the replacement of Hugh Latimer by Nicholas Wotton, the dean of both Canterbury and York, the changes between October and February are all among the lawyers.

prerogative.²⁷

Our knowledge of the drafting process derives from Martyr's letters and the internal evidence of Harleian MS 426. The winter months of 1551-2 clearly saw the committee intensively at work. Martyr was at Lambeth for this purpose over most of the winter.²⁸ We have already seen that in June 1552, however, he explained to Bullinger that completion of the project had been delayed by disagreement over the sacraments. The reference is tantalisingly brief, but the letter was written from Oxford and its implication is that an impasse had been reached; for the moment the committee had run out of time.²⁹ Autumn brought a breakthrough. On 4 October Martyr reported to Bullinger that he was back at Lambeth 'in order that those things in the ecclesiastical laws which remained unfinished last winter may be completed'. There had clearly been little progress over the summer, though the resumption of activity suggests that the problems over the sacraments had been resolved.³⁰ His optimism that no further obstacles existed was not shared by others. Writing the following day Richard Cox told Bullinger that:

the severe institutions of Christian discipline we most utterly abominate. We would be sons, but we tremble at the rod. Do pray stir us up, and our nobility too, by the Spirit which is given to you, to a regard for discipline; without which, I grieve to say it, the kingdom will be taken away from us, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruit thereof.³¹

The revival of activity was galvanised by the fact that time was running out. Parliament's enabling legislation set a deadline of 1 February 1553, and moves in April 1552 to renew the commission or to extend its life had failed, apparently for lack of parliamentary time.³² The October activity reported by Martyr and Cox was linked to privy council pressure for progress.³³ Lack of evidence hinders accurate reconstruction of activity over the following months. But Martyr's autumn presence at Lambeth was not prolonged, and the indications are that as far as Cranmer was concerned the work was substantially complete. Preoccupied in early October not only with the *Reformatio* but also with successfully resisting a determined last-

²⁷ Micron to Bullinger, 9 Mar 1552, *OL* II, 580; *ET*, 379; Utenhoven to Bullinger, 9 March 1552, *OL* II, 590; *ET*, 383-84.

²⁸ *OL* II, 580; *ET*, 379; cf also ab Ulmis to Bullinger, 10 Jan, 5 Feb 1552, *OL* I, 444, 447; *ET*, 292, 295. It is at least likely that the committee drew on the expertise of other members of the full commission when they were in London: Hooper, for example, was staying with Cranmer in March 1552: Cranmer to Bullinger, 20 Mar 1552, *OL* I, 23-4; *ET*, 15.

²⁹ Martyr to Bullinger, 14 June 1552, Gorham, 282.

³⁰ Martyr to Bullinger, 4 Oct 1552, Gorham, 288.

³¹ Cox to Bullinger, 5 Oct 1552, *OL* I, 123; *ET*, 80.

³² *TCR*, lii-liii.

³³ *APC*, IV, 138; Nichols (1857), 543.

minute attempt initiated by John Knox to amend the second *Prayer Book*, he was then absent from London, heading a heresy commission in Kent, from late October until early 1553. He did not reappear at the council board until 21 February.³⁴ The circumstances were thus not propitious for further substantive work, though the preparation of a completed version of the final code was presumably put in hand. Nevertheless, the February deadline was not achieved and the rejection of the completed code arose in connection with the need to renew its parliamentary sanction.³⁵

Bray argues that Harleian MS 426 represents the stage which the revision had reached by the autumn of 1552, and that it was presented in this form to the privy council on 11 October. The additional eight chapters known from Foxe's edition were then added before submission of the reordered final text in March 1553. Examination of the Harleian manuscript certainly suggests hasty completion. Its final four titles (*De dilapidationibus*, *De alienatione et elocatione bonorum ecclesiasticorum*, *De electione* and *De testamentis*) do not appear in Cranmer's handwritten list of contents, and are unedited, while time was clearly lacking for one of the scribes to transcribe the last title into the elegant formal hand characteristic of the rest of the document. However, the suggestion that the extra eight chapters were all drafted and agreed after the October 11 meeting is not without difficulty, given the absence of both Cranmer and Martyr from London from late October. They included the significant disciplinary titles *De poenis ecclesiasticis*, *De suspensione*, *De deprivatione* and *De excommunicatione*. In the light of Cox's comment, it is improbable that the details of these important titles were not settled at least in principle before Cranmer's departure from London.

The internal evidence sheds some light on the chronology. The final form of the Harleian MS 426 manuscript represents the last of a series of arrangements of the scribal drafts. The first was of fourteen titles in a single hand. It included the doctrinal and matrimonial titles together with material on oaths, forgery, preachers, defamation and ecclesiastical benefices.³⁶ It thus represents the completion of an initial stage of drafting by committee members dealing primarily with doctrinal and church order issues. The second arrangement added a further twenty-eight titles, including most of the legal material, and involved some adjustment of the initial

³⁴ MacCulloch (1996), 524-34.

³⁵ For a discussion of the rejection of the *Reformatio*, see TCR, lxxiii-vi. It is unclear whether Northumberland's confrontation with Cranmer occurred during a parliamentary session (the House of Lords record bears no trace of this) or during a preparatory meeting of the privy council.

³⁶ The second and third titles of this arrangement, *De haeresibus* and *De iudiciis contra haereses*, were drafted as one and separated by Cranmer.

foliation. It must have been made after the resolution of the dispute over the sacraments, since this title is now included, indicating that it dates from the summer or autumn of 1552. It is nevertheless likely that much of the material, notably the legal titles, had been prepared the previous winter. The Harleian manuscript is prefaced with a list, in Cranmer's own hand, of the titles following the inclusion of this second arrangement. The final four titles were added after this listing was compiled, and completed the evolution of the document, apart from Foxe's annotations.

A number of obstacles impede clear answers to the question of authorship of individual titles. Beyond the internal evidence of Harleian MS 426 and Foxe's edition, we have no records of how the commission and its drafting committee organised their work.³⁷ No autograph drafts have survived from the initial drafting, and so the original authorship of no title can be ascertained with certainty. The Harleian text itself provides only limited clues to authorship, since the drafters' work was recorded by a team of scribes. The evidence both of the scribal hands and of the editing process suggests that the committee initially divided, probably into two teams, one clerical, one legal, for the primary drafting. Two main scribal hands are discernible in the document, one responsible broadly for the doctrinal and church order titles, another for the legal titles. A further hand transcribed the sacraments, idolatry and divine offices titles.

When this scribal work was complete, the teams appear to have exchanged drafts for the final revision. Cranmer clearly supervised the whole process closely: extensive amendments in his hand exist in both the doctrinal and legal parts of the manuscript. Some doctrinal titles, notably *De Haeresibus*, are extensively annotated in his own hand, suggesting that he was not responsible for the initial drafts. On the other hand, some titles bear no amendments at all, for example, the controversial *De Sacramentis*.

At the editorial stage, the hands of Cranmer, Martyr, and Haddon were the most active. Their comments and alterations disclose how the final editing was divided up, but there are almost no comparable clues to the minds behind the original drafts. Martyr's annotations illustrate the point. They are indisputably evident in seven of the manuscript's titles, including extensive annotations to some of the legal titles,

³⁷ TCR, liv- lxxiii, analyses this internal evidence in some detail.

whose editing he took over from Cranmer.³⁸ By contrast, he made only four editorial contributions to the doctrinal and church order titles, of which all but one are minor. Two, in *De admittendis ad ecclesiastica beneficia*, alter the proposals for the ages at which men may be admitted to ecclesiastical office: deans and archdeacons are to be at least thirty, as already specified for bishops; and, the minimum age for free prebendaries is to be twenty-one, not twenty.³⁹ The third, a marginal note in *De iudiciis contra haereses* he suggests a correction to the sentence order.⁴⁰ Foxe's edition shows that these amendments were adopted in the final version of the *Reformatio*. However, Martyr's comments were clearly not the last word in the revision process. His most extensive amendment to a doctrinal title, in which he specified exile, indefinite imprisonment, or other penalty, as the appropriate civil penalty for a contumacious heretic, did not survive in the final code.⁴¹

Martyr's editorial involvement was most extensive in the legal titles. He shared their editing with Cranmer: *De exceptionibus* reveals that the archbishop had begun to devise individual headings for the twenty-one draft canons, but after completing the first four turned the rest over to his colleague.⁴² Martyr's amendments are normally editorial. Headings are added, duplication noted, clarifying comments inserted, irrelevant points marked for deletion, and the occasional comment passed on the

³⁸ TCR, lv-lix; see Sachs (1982), 81-5, for a further discussion of the process of composition. The titles in which Martyr's hand is identifiable are: *De iudiciis contra haereses* (R, 3), *De admittendis ad ecclesiastica beneficia* (R, 11), *De consuetudine* (R, 46), *De praescriptionibus* (R, 47), *De exceptionibus* (R, 52), *De sententia et re iudicata* (R, 53), and *De appellationibus* (R, 54). The first two of these titles were included in the fourteen titles in Cranmer's initial foliation. The remaining titles all deal with court procedures. There is also a small editorial superscript clarifying the abbreviation *pub* in the heading of the third canon in *De iuramentis et periuriis* (R, 39.3, *Forma publicae poenae*), which is possibly in Martyr's hand.

³⁹ R, 11.21, 22, Harleian MS 426, 64^{r-v}; TCR, 292-5.

⁴⁰ R, 3.1, *Iudicia haeresum quibus modis procedant et quae sunt in illis specialia*. Martyr's comment reads *Ordo codicis corrigendus*, : Harleian MS 426, 17^r. Bray thinks this note, whose words are divided and written in a column of seven short lines in the margin, may be in Foxe's hand, but comparison of the handwriting with a long amendment which is indubitably in Martyr's hand later in the same title (Harleian MS 426, 18^v) strongly suggests it is his work; TCR, 214, n4.

⁴¹ R, 3.4, Harleian MS 426, 18^v; TCR, 218. Martyr's amendment replaced the terse *exilio vel perpetuo carcere* with *vel ut in perpetuum pellatur exilium vel ad aeternas carceris deprimatur tenebras, aut alioqui pro magistratus prudenti consideratione plectendus, ut maxime illius conversioni expedire videbitur*. His concern was not only to specify the punishment, but also, characteristically, to outline its purpose. The decision to exclude not only Martyr's amendment but also the original wording may reflect an awareness that in specifying how the civil magistrate should act, the *Reformatio* would be crossing the bounds of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, as prescribed in the enabling statute.

⁴² Harleian MS 426, 202^r-207^r.

propriety of a provision.⁴³ Not all his suggestions were adopted. In *De praescriptionibus*, for example, a clause he underlined for deletion, adding the marginal comment, *ista non faciunt ad legem*, nevertheless survived.⁴⁴ On the other hand, the most substantial single addition he proposed was in this title, more than trebling the length of its final section. Martyr's amendment reveals a considerable insight into this relatively arcane topic.⁴⁵ His alterations are most numerous in the lengthy title *De sententia et re iudicata*, and include numerous procedural clarifications and elaborations of meaning.⁴⁶ In *De appellationibus*, his amendments are widespread, but are generally brief and editorial rather than legal.⁴⁷

The nature of his editorial work on these titles suggests he had not been involved in the initial drafting, which had presumably been entrusted to the lawyers on the committee. On the other hand, the lightness of his editorial hand in the doctrinal and church order section in Harleian MS 426 yields little useful indication of his authorship of these titles, in whose drafting one might presume he was closely involved. His editorial comments thus shed light on the process of composition, and somewhat surprisingly reveal his facility with legal technicalities. However, they give few positive clues over the precise contribution he made to the initial drafting process. Nevertheless, examination of the contents of the code does suggest some correspondence with elements of Martyr's ecclesiology, as well as significant divergence. Many of its provisions reflect Reformation priorities, some of which were his particular concern. On the other hand, on a number of issues the *Reformatio* displayed a markedly traditional approach, despite the prominence given to determined reformers such as Martyr in its preparation.

Tudor Church Reform

The royal supremacy

In both conception and execution, the *Reformatio* was destined to be unique. Continental church orders were generally enacted with the agreement and under the authority of the temporal power. But by comparison with orders devised for urban

⁴³ For the latter, see R, 47.5, *Contra visitantes nemo praescribere potest*, TCR, 634; Harleian MS 426, 209^r, where he makes the approving marginal comment, *Puto de visitationibus hoc idem propemodum haberi*.

⁴⁴ R, 47.3, Harleian MS 426, 208^v; TCR, 632.

⁴⁵ R, 47.7, Harleian MS 426, 211^r-211^v; TCR, 636-9.

⁴⁶ R, 53, Harleian MS 426, 246^r-258^r; TCR, 682-97.

⁴⁷ R, 54, Harleian MS 426, 213^r-231^r; TCR, 698-733.

city-states, the *Reformatio* differed in both its territorial scope, and in the historical circumstances which had opened the road to change. Further, the particular circumstances of the relationship between crown and church was critical, as was the nature of Tudor rule.

The most consistent element of the monarchy's ecclesiastical policy since 1532 had been the enforcement of its supremacy. If for much of Henry VIII's reign the church's confessional stance awaited its definitive settlement, royal headship over the church was not negotiable. From one perspective, it represented the completion of the church's assimilation into England's highly centralised royal polity.⁴⁸ But beyond securing the autonomy of the realm from papal jurisdiction, its purpose tended to be defined by necessity rather than theory. Since its origins were more personal and political than theological, those called upon to defend and promote the supremacy differed over its grounds and scope: its initial defence was as much political as theological. The justification famously claimed by the 1534 Act in Restraint of Appeals, that 'this realm of England is an empire', had both historical antecedents and contemporary advocates. This contended that authority over the church had always belonged to the crown: the papacy had usurped the monarchy's rightful role.⁴⁹ However, political acquiescence to the supremacy spawned a range of views over its legitimacy. The assumptions underlying the 'imperial' theory, for example, were far from commanding universal acceptance in England's legal tradition. 'Descending' notions of political authority, with their Roman law affinities, were less congenial to English minds than 'ascending' accounts. For Christopher St German, for example, the supremacy was to be defended on account of its consistency with Marsilian consent theory. The church's *potestas jurisdictionis* belonged to the secular authority, but as a common lawyer he was suspicious of imperial kingship. Rather, it was through the sovereign legal body, the king-in-parliament, that the headship was legitimately exercised.⁵⁰ Thomas Starkey, however, came to argue that Christ had left the government of the church to secular rulers. Once he was 'elected', the monarch possessed supreme authority in himself.⁵¹ From the perspective of constitutional theory, the supremacy was one more novel

⁴⁸ David Loades, *Tudor Government* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 1-3.

⁴⁹ 24 Henry VIII, c12. For late medieval and Tudor appropriation of notions of *imperium*, see David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 34-5 and John Guy, 'Monarchy and counsel: models of the state', in *The Sixteenth Century*, ed. Patrick Collinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 113-42; Loades (1997), 14.

⁵⁰ Joan L. O'Donovan, *Theology of Law and Authority in the English Reformation* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 67-71; John Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 374-5.

⁵¹ Thomas F. Mayer, *Thomas Starkey and the Commonwealth: Humanist politics and religion in the reign of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 218-26.

expression of the aggrandising ambition of Tudor monarchy, to which political theorists endeavoured to adapt their accounts of governmental authority.

A further peculiarity of England's settlement was that the regime's assumption of authority over the church was not at first identified with the evangelical interest, nor promoted as necessary to the reform of the church. Traditionalists and evangelicals such as Gardiner and Cranmer could both accept the royal supremacy.⁵² Both of them saw it as seen as a consequence of the king's own divine office, contending that the supremacy was not the creation of either king or parliament: they merely recognised and enforced it.⁵³ However, whereas for Gardiner the supremacy was a jurisdictional one and existed to defend the inherited doctrine of the church, in Cranmer's hands it was a vehicle for doctrinal reformation, and had virtually no bounds to its freedom of action apart from Scripture. In the 1530s, collaborating with Edward Foxe on the collection of material supporting the supremacy known as the *Collectanea satis copiosa*, Cranmer had endorsed its connection with the monarch's *imperium*, as well as the notion that the *potestas jurisdictionis* was of human origin and was hence derived from the king. By the 1540s, he was prepared to argue that the king had the power to confer, though not to exercise, the *potestas ordinis*.⁵⁴ His most public enunciation of this position came at Edward VI's coronation. In his address, Cranmer signalled that there would be no change to the Constantinian shape of church and state restored by Henry VIII, and spelt out the purposes for which the supremacy existed, in language which also signalled an end to doctrinal vacillation. Not only was the monarch the divinely-anointed ruler, deriving his power and authority directly from God, unmediated by ecclesiastical ceremony or office. He was also responsible for restoring the true worship of God:

Your majesty is God's vice-gerent and Christ's vicar within your own dominions, and to see, with your predecessor Josiah, God truly worshipped, and idolatry destroyed, the tyranny of the bishops of Rome banished from your subjects, and images removed. These be the signs of a second Josiah, who reformed the church of God in his days.⁵⁵

This injunction sums up Cranmer's settled assumptions on the relationship of church and crown, and form the background to the *Reformatio*. Kings have committed to them the 'whole cure' of their subjects, spiritual and temporal.⁵⁶ These convictions coincided most closely with 'imperial' theory of the crown's authority,

⁵² Loades (1970), 45-7, 49.

⁵³ Guy (1988), 369-70; W. Ian P. Hazlitt, 'Settlements: the British Isles', in *Handbook of European History 1400-1600: Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation*, eds. Thomas A. Brady, Heiko A. Oberman and James D. Tracy (Leiden: Brill, 1995), II, 459-61.

⁵⁴ Carleton (2001), 10-12, 18-23.

⁵⁵ Cox, II, 127.

⁵⁶ Cox, II, 116-17.

and it was these which were the foundation for the *Reformatio*. If they were not fully shared by every member of the commission, they nevertheless formed the condition on which its work was based.

Church law by royal decree

Reformed thinkers tended to see ecclesiastical laws as temporary, changeable provisions for the circumstances of an individual church. They were enacted by the church for its external order.⁵⁷ The circumstances under which the *Reformatio* was to be promulgated, however, scarcely accommodated this concept of ecclesiastical power. Its form demonstrated this divergence. In a striking move, the code was framed neither as the decree of an ecclesiastical council nor as parliamentary statute, but rather as a royal proclamation. Drafted by a joint lay and clerical commission authorised by parliament, the *Reformatio* was to be promulgated on the king's authority and with the approval of the privy council. It accordingly employed the royal 'we' throughout, and each of its provisions was formally an expression of the king's will.⁵⁸

The *Reformatio's* approach to law-making on this scale represented an approach peculiar to England, where, more commonly than elsewhere in Europe, government was habitually understood in legal terms. Notwithstanding the emerging imperial ideology, the king traditionally exercised his authority in the context of numerous interlocking laws and customs. English common law was a critical component of this, and in the sixteenth century the relationship between it and royal legislative autonomy was not settled. Further, though England's common law inheritance was notably distinct from the European *ius commune*, the late medieval canonists' principle that 'what touches all should be approved by all' had been influential, and theorists such as Bracton and Fortescue had assumed that consent was critical to the legitimate exercise of power, as would Sir Thomas Smith. Indeed, it was generally assumed that the royal prerogative, through which much of the Tudor monarch's executive activity was exercised, was granted by the common law of the realm. Royal rights arose from the king's feudal suzerainty and were exercised in an inherited legal framework. Thus the heritage of custom and common law, and the assumption that the king should not transgress either divine or natural law, set imprecise but real boundaries to the accepted exercise of royal authority. Moreover, the sixteenth century saw the gradual acceptance that only parliamentary statute

⁵⁷ Sachs, 122.

⁵⁸ 3 & 4 Edward VI c.11, SR IV, 111-12; for a discussion of the domination in practice of the clerical interest on the commission, see TCR, I-ii.

could alter the common law. In fact, the interaction of Tudor governmental innovation, developments in continental jurisprudence, and the strength of the common law system meant the framework was in a state of evolution. In this context, the status of the *Reformatio* was both innovative and characteristic of its era.⁵⁹

The code's form as a royal proclamation exemplified the creative ambiguity offered by this situation. The king was understood as the source of law, but the scope of his legislative autonomy was not settled. Though under Henry VIII the standard means of authorisation for many forms of business had become statute law, proclamations were widely employed to enforce or publish an existing statute or common law, to announce royal acts or to enforce the king's rights. They were normally brief, and though they sought to supplement statute law, they were not subordinate to it. Indeed, their personal tone, and recitals both of purpose and penalty for non-observance, made them a forceful instrument of personal government. The choice of this instrument for the *Reformatio* therefore had precedent, especially since under Edward VI, they had already seen frequent use to consolidate the ecclesiastical authority of the crown.⁶⁰

Nevertheless, the scale of the *Reformatio* made it unlike any former proclamation. Adoption of this form may have been due to practical considerations: its size and intended coherence would have made it unwieldy to debate in the parliamentary forum. Moreover, while the regime was always reluctant to involve the clerical convocations in the implementation of religious change, the medieval canon law, the closest counterpart to the code, was a corpus of which parliament had little formal experience. The new relationship of church and crown appears to have been thought sufficient to justify a new approach, conveniently sidestepping both parliament and convocation.

The proposal to reconstitute the church's traditional jurisdiction under the crown nonetheless represented a major shift in England's legal constitution. From one point of view, change was not radical: for practical purposes, the system of church courts would continue to operate with relatively little alteration, and the scope of their jurisdiction would alter remarkably little.⁶¹ However, the status of their legal

⁵⁹ Geoffrey Elton, *The Tudor Constitution* (2nd edn., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 17-19; Loades (1997), 1-16. Loades, 14, comments that by 1540, as a consequence of the supremacy, it had become accepted that the proper instrument to interpret the natural and divine laws in their application to England was statute law. Cf Brundage (1995), 106-9.

⁶⁰ *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, eds. Paul L. Hughes & James F. Larkin, 2 vols (New Haven & London: Yale, 1964), I, xxii-xxxvi.

⁶¹ TCR, cxliii-v.

corpus was to be decisively clarified. Since 1532, the medieval canon law had remained in force in so far as it was consistent with the laws and customs of the realm. The *Reformatio* now proposed to re-establish its separate identity, by way of royal proclamation. This would in turn remove the uncertainty over the scope of jurisdiction of the church courts, which had become advantageous to the interests of the common lawyers.⁶² Further, the legal corpus which the church courts would enforce was, despite parliamentary authorisation, to be neither statute nor common law, but royal law. Court procedure would remain that of the *ius commune*, but whereas this had previously operated under papal authority, it was now to be incorporated into England's legal fabric. A foreign legal system was arguably being domesticated. From the perspective of the common lawyers, who in the 1530s had argued that the king's *imperium* did not place him above the common law, the monarchy was acquiring an enlarged legal competence, outside the purview of the traditional king's courts. The *Reformatio* did not disguise this character, presenting the ecclesiastical law as the creation of the monarch alone. Whether or not this prospect contributed to the rejection of the code in 1553, its implementation would have significantly altered England's legal equilibrium and the status of the crown vis-a-vis the law.⁶³

England's reform of canon law was also distinctive from the perspective of the continental Reformation, represented by Martyr. Its form represented a striking statement of the extent of the supremacy. Whereas the Tridentine canons were being framed by a church council, the response of the church in England would be decreed by her temporal ruler. The *Reformatio* was to reflect the bold subordination of church to magistrate adopted in the Henrician Reformation and unambiguously upheld by Cranmer. Though Martyr had already expressed the view that the prince was the 'father of the nation', the ancient concept which both Musculus and Bucer had related to the Roman civil law concept of *merum imperium* in order to justify the prince's role as guardian of right religion, the *Reformatio's* concept of magisterial responsibility is greater than he envisaged in his writings.⁶⁴ However, his theory of the relationship of church and magistrate offered little resistance to the direction taken by the *Reformatio*: Cranmer's position went further than the permissive, corrective role Martyr envisaged, but was congruent with it.

It is instructive to highlight salient features of this concept in the *Reformatio*. With minor alterations, the document proposed leaving intact the inherited structure of the English church. The traditional episcopal regime was retained, together with the

⁶² Helmholz (1990), 35-6.

⁶³ Loades (1997), 11-13; Guy (1988) 370-6.

⁶⁴ *Rom*, 640; *Romans*, 426^v; Ford (2000), 161-3.

church courts, which kept their inherited jurisdiction. Indeed, the existence of the court system is assumed: the code does not establish or even describe it.⁶⁵ However, both the church's ministry and ecclesiastical jurisdiction were now to be exercised in the king's name. Indeed, in view of the king's position, Christian profession was an obligation of every subject, as the opening canon of the first title ordained:

It is our will and command that all people to whom our rule in any way extends, shall accept and profess the Christian religion. Those who engage in any thoughts or deeds contrary to it turn God away from them by their ungodliness; moreover, we who are servants of the divine majesty decree that all goods, and finally even life itself shall be confiscated from those who have involved themselves in that enormous crime of ungodliness. And this shall apply to all our subjects, of whatever name, rank or condition they may be.⁶⁶

The second canon muted the ferocity of this decree, specifying that this orthodoxy was to be professed with 'a pure heart, a good conscience and an unfeigned faith' by 'all children who are born again by Jesus Christ'.⁶⁷ But the underlying assumption was unsurprising: Bucer had argued that kings should take care that religion be administered by suitable ministers, 'nor shall any one of their subjects contrive openly to subtract himself from the doctrine and discipline of Christ or have the impious audacity to be opposed to him'.⁶⁸ In the *Reformatio*, doctrinal conformity as well as obedience to ecclesiastical law becomes a question of submission to the king as the church's head. The possibility is envisaged that spiritual offences might incur temporal penalties. The traditional distinction between the two jurisdictions, spiritual and temporal, if never absolute in practice, is further blurred. The position the *Reformatio* accords the monarch is thus different from Martyr's, though his theology offered little obstacle to its adoption. We have seen how he defended a positive role for the magistrate in the church, as the custodian of the first table of the law. But this was essentially corrective: the minister is not under the direction of the magistrate in the exercise of his office. Nor does the magistrate govern the church in the same way as he rules the common weal.⁶⁹ The position of the

⁶⁵ TCR, cxliii.

⁶⁶ R, 1.1 *De fide Christiana ab omnibus amplectanda et profitenda*, TCR, 171.

⁶⁷ *Omnes filii Dei per Iesum Christum renati, ex corde puro, conscientia bona et fide non ficta credant et confiteantur unum esse vivum et verum Deum*; R, 1.2 *De natura Dei et beata Trinitate, quid sit credendum*, TCR, 171.

⁶⁸ The *De Regno Christi*, Bucer's last work, was specifically written for Edward VI as a 'blueprint' for church reform. It was sent in manuscript form to the king's tutor, the humanist evangelical scholar John Cheke, on 21 October 1550. Though not published until 1557, in Strasbourg, it was certainly known and read among the evangelical leaders of the Edwardian regime. The differences between Martyr and Bucer should not be exaggerated: Martyr is said to have both seen and approved of *De Regno Christi* when it was being prepared. *Melanchthon and Bucer*, LCC 19 (1969), 157-73, 190.

⁶⁹ *Rom*, 640-7; *Romans*, 428^v-431^r.

Reformatio is different: a minister's failure to observe its provisions on church order could be construed as open disobedience to the king.

The *Reformatio* also presses beyond Martyr's conception of the relationship of the civil and church powers in its assumptions about ecclesiastical laws. Martyr consistently held that the church itself has the power to order its outward life. His alternative to papal autocracy is for the whole church to agree its order.⁷⁰ The Samuel scholion *De legibus ecclesiasticis* would repeat this: liberty to make and change ecclesiastical laws belongs to the church. Regulation of the church's internal order by the magistrate is not envisaged. But the distinction he was to make between civil and ecclesiastical laws is absent from the *Reformatio*, perhaps accounting for the fact that despite his extensive involvement in its preparation, mention of the code is altogether missing from his subsequent works.

The form, content and intended implementation of the *Reformatio* emphasised the fact that the church in England was dependent for its order on the Crown. The convocations, for example, neither played any part in its preparation nor find mention in its pages. Apart from its provisions for synods, the conceding of ecclesiastical autonomy was not contemplated. The provisions of the *Reformatio* embodied an unqualified supremacy of the monarch over the whole of the church's polity, as *De officio et iurisdictione omnium iudicum* exemplifies:

The king has and can exercise the most complete jurisdiction, both civil and ecclesiastical, within his kingdoms and dominions as much over archbishops, bishops, clergy and other ministers, as over lay people, since all jurisdiction, both ecclesiastical and secular, is derived from him as from one and the same source.⁷¹

This dependence on the Crown is a repeated assumption, extending to areas as distinct as church government, courts and appointments. Provincial synods are summoned by the archbishop only *nostru iussu*.⁷² Bishops are to be the administrators of *nostrae leges ecclesiasticae*. The final appeal in ecclesiastical causes is to the king.⁷³ The right of presentment to vacant livings, if not exercised within six months, after defaulting to the bishop, reverts to the crown.⁷⁴ Martyr had long accepted the role of the magistrate in reforming and defending the church but its subordination to the magistrate in the *Reformatio* has no parallel in his writings.

⁷⁰ USD, 142; PML 1: 68.

⁷¹ R, 37.2, *iurdictio regis*, TCR, 518-19.

⁷² R, 20.17, *De archiepiscopis*, TCR, 364-5.

⁷³ R, 20.12, *De variis et multiplicibus episcopi muneribus*, TCR, 358-9; R, 54.11, *Quo ordine appellandum sit*, TCR, 704-5.

⁷⁴ R, 11.6, TCR, 282-3.

Doctrine, Church and Ministry

The Reformatio and the Articles

The relationship between the doctrinal articles in the *Reformatio* and other attempts to articulate the confessional standards of the church in England is intriguing. In particular, the doctrinal and sacramental titles of the *Reformatio* repay comparison with the provisions of the *Forty-Two Articles*. Duplication and overlap was evidently accepted as necessary. Some canons, for example, display a close verbal correspondence with their parallels in the *Articles*, or suggest dependence on a common source, normally the *Augsburg Confession* or the *Thirteen Articles* of 1538. Much of the second canon in the opening title, for example, which concerns the nature of God and the Trinity, bears a striking similarity to the first articles of both the *Thirteen Articles* and the *Forty-Two Articles*.⁷⁵ In other cases, the treatment of a subject in the *Reformatio* is parallel to its counterpart in the *Forty-Two Articles*, but the two are clearly independent compositions. This is particularly the case with the canons dealing with the sacraments.⁷⁶

However, the two documents are not interchangeable. The *Reformatio* does not profess to provide as comprehensive a doctrinal statement as the *Articles*. This is evident from the content of the code's principal doctrinal section, *De Summa Trinitate et Fide Catholica*. This title confines itself to a treatment of the Trinity, Christology, and the authoritative sources for Christian doctrine: Scripture, creeds, councils and the fathers, and the relationship between them.⁷⁷ Many key doctrinal issues, for example sin, freewill, and justification, are addressed only in the subsequent, more extensive title *De haeresibus*. Here, their treatment is specifically articulated in contradistinction to heterodox views, mainly in their anabaptist forms.⁷⁸

This is also the case over the *Reformatio*'s approach to ecclesiology. The whole code constitutes a statement of ecclesiological identity, but the underlying doctrine is not deliberately articulated. Church issues are normally addressed tangentially, arising in connection with other concerns. Thus while the first title mirrors and amplifies the *Articles*' treatment of the authority of church councils, its compilers' purpose was

⁷⁵ R, 1.2, TCR, 170-3; DER, 285.

⁷⁶ Compare, for example, R, 2.17 *De sacramentorum natura*, TCR, 202-5, with Article 26, *De sacramentis*, DER, 298-9.

⁷⁷ R, 1.1-17, TCR, 170-85.

⁷⁸ R, 2.7, *de peccato originis, libero arbitrio, et iustificatione*, TCR, 192-3.

to defend the supremacy of Scripture over conciliar decrees.⁷⁹ The sole definition of the church arises in the title *De haeresibus*. Here, the canon *De Romana ecclesia et potestate Romani pontificis* exemplifies the code's approach. A short definition is provided, in order to repudiate papal claims to universal authority. Its wording outlines a two-mark doctrine of the church in words strikingly similar to Article Twenty, and clearly drawing on the *Augsburg Confession*.⁸⁰ Like the *Articles*, the *Reformatio* is content with a description of the church more circumscribed and with fewer marks than Martyr's.

This is despite indications that some of Martyr's doctrinal concerns are more fully reflected in the code than in the *Articles*. For example, repeated denials of the ubiquity of Christ's humanity strongly suggest his concern for this issue. The inclusion of a separate canon concerning the two natures of Christ is a striking amplification of the Christology of the *Articles*, and includes the first of several specific refutations of ubiquity.⁸¹ Though Cranmer would concur with this emphasis, its stress suggests Martyr's opposition to the Lutheran ubiquitarianism, against which, already in print, he would continue to be one of its foremost opponents.⁸²

It is also likely that he influenced the outcome of the dispute over the sacraments. The *De sacramentis* title eschews any reference to the nub of the controversy, as he had reported it to Bullinger: there is no suggestion that the sacraments themselves confer grace. Rather they are signs, sealing the grace of Christ conveyed by promises, merits and forgiveness. The title's description of the power of the sacraments, recalling and professing Christ's work, sharpening faith, and strengthening mutual love, is similar to Martyr's description in his commentary on

⁷⁹ R, 1.14, *De conciliis quid sentiendum*, TCR, 180-3.

⁸⁰ R, 2.21: Nos enim eam quae cerni potest ecclesiam sic definimus, ut omnium coetus sit fidelium hominum in quo Sacra Scriptura sincere docetur et sacramenta (saltem his eorum partibus quae necessariae sunt) iuxta Christi praescriptum administrantur; TCR, 210. This text is perhaps transitional between the *Augsburg* and *Articles* formulation: 'quae cerni potest', for example, anticipates Article 20's 'visibilis', while *Augsburg's* 'evangelium' has yet to become 'Sacra Scriptura' rather than the article's more reformed 'Verbum Dei'.

⁸¹ R, 1.4, *De duabus Christi naturis post resurrectionem*, TCR, 172-3; further denials are in R, 2.5 *de duabus naturis Christi, de corpore Christi*, TCR, 188-91; R, 2.19 *De transubstantiatione in eucharistia*, TCR, 204-7; R, 5.4 *Quid sit eucharistia, quos fructos habeat*, TCR, 228-9.

⁸² Martyr had already attacked the Lutheran position on ubiquity in the 1549 *Tractatio*, 56^r-63^r; PML 7: 107-18. Bucer on the other hand had urged Martyr to drop the language of Christ's absence and stress the exhibition of Christ's body in the Lord's Supper; though he admitted that he did not hold to a local presence of Christ in the supper, he was uncomfortable with explicit denials of ubiquity, Bucer to Martyr, 20 June 1549, Gorham, 86-92.

Romans 4.11.⁸³

Given his acknowledged expertise, it would be surprising if Martyr did not have a hand in drafting the code's doctrinal titles. However, their reliance in many cases on existing formulae shows that demonstrating continuity with recognised doctrinal positions remained as important as establishing Reformed credentials. The purpose of the doctrinal passages arguably precluded original theological formulation. While they were to address contemporary concerns, particularly the need to distinguish and defend the church's doctrine against anabaptist heterodoxy and the accusations of libertinism which could arise if this threat were not countered, the *Reformatio* was also, at least initially, part of Cranmer's bid for international evangelical leadership. As the greater part of the document was being drafted, he was attempting to entice leaders as diverse as Melancthon, Calvin and Bullinger to England for a council to rival Trent. Doctrinally, it is therefore not surprising that he steered the *Reformatio* to moorings in waters which were free of at least some of the shoals on which Protestant unity had foundered in the past.⁸⁴ Given Martyr's own interest in the continental dimension, he would scarcely have demurred.

Church and Ministry

Introduction

If the *Reformatio* had been implemented, the sections destined for the greatest impact were not, however, its doctrinal titles: it was the *Forty-Two Articles* and the *Acts of Uniformity* which were to be the regime's chosen instruments for enforcing orthodoxy. Nor would the legal titles have meant significant change: the church courts retained almost all their traditional jurisdiction, including the matrimonial causes which in many continental settlements had been transferred to the civil power. The purpose of the legal titles was to accommodate the ecclesiastical courts to the royal supremacy, and to codify rather than radically alter their procedure.⁸⁵

However, the titles on ministry and worship were vehicles for implementing an unmistakably new pattern of church life. Bray's comment that the *De contionatoribus*

⁸³ R, 5.1, *Quid sit sacramentum*, TCR, 226-7; CP IV.7.5. Hall's suggestion that the wording of this section reflects a victory for Martyr, Hooper, Laski and Cheke over Cranmer misreads both Cranmer's eucharistic theology and the religious politics of the last year of the reign: Basil Hall, 'Cranmer, the eucharist and the Foreign Divines', in Ayris and Selwyn, eds. (1993), 245.

⁸⁴ MacCulloch (1996), 501-2.

⁸⁵ TCR, cxliii-clv.

title 'is the most obviously protestant one in the *Reformatio*', could apply to several of these sections.⁸⁶ Some of their provisions, such as those which enforced clerical participation in public worship, were traditional. Others were responses to the urgent need to regulate patronage and restrict the misuse of church property in the wake of the transfer into lay hands of much ecclesiastical property, rights and duties. Nevertheless, at the heart of the *Reformatio*'s provisions lay a determined effort to complete the work begun by Thomas Cromwell and resumed under Edward VI, to give England a church order reflecting evangelical priorities.

This programme, moreover, represents not only the completion of the Edwardian reformation but also a response to the foreign scholars' criticism of its defects. As we observed in chapter five, Martyr and Bucer had lamented the regime's lack of attention to the implementation of reformation in the parishes. The lack of provision for preachers was the nub of their petition, and the *Reformatio* clearly aimed to redress this. The penultimate canon in the title on preachers sums up the heartbeat of the revolution: 'the main Sunday worship consists in receiving the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures'.⁸⁷ England's bishops were now responsible for supervising an order which made Sunday above all a day of instruction, and for equipping the church and its ministers with the means for this task.

Evidence to suggest that it was Martyr's ecclesiological vision which guided the scribal pen in these titles is lacking, but they are consistent with his principles. His role can even be seen as that of an executor of Bucer's proposals, spelt out in some detail in the *De Regno Christi*, many of whose recommendations find distinct echoes in the *Reformatio*.⁸⁸ Martyr had been consulted on this work, approving of its contents, before Bucer sent it to the king, via Cheke, in October 1550.⁸⁹ Given his subsequent membership of the reform commission, his regard for Bucer, and the extent of the recommendations made in *De Regno Christi* specifically for the ordering of the life of the church in England, it is likely Martyr would have sought recourse to the work during his involvement with the *Reformatio*. Moreover, he would have found allies on the commission: Richard Cox, and perhaps also Bucer's erstwhile bishop, Thomas Goodricke of Ely, to whom he had addressed his *Censura* on the first *Prayer Book*.

⁸⁶ TCR, cxiii.

⁸⁷ R, 7.6, *De his qui interesse debent contionibus*, TCR, 242-3.

⁸⁸ Sachs, 105, comments that the *De Regno* 'approximates a theological rationale for the Reform'; the extent of Bucer's readiness to entrust the government of the church into royal hands, and also to endorse and provide for episcopal leadership, bears a striking similarity to the *Reformatio*'s provisions

⁸⁹ John Strype, *The Life of the Learned Sir John Cheke* (Oxford, 1821), 55-6.

Examination of the three most significant titles in this area highlights their correspondence with the reformers' agenda.

De contionatoribus

The Harleian manuscript reveals that this title was one of the earliest to be completed, being included in the foliation of the first fourteen.⁹⁰ Its manuscript is lightly annotated, mainly in Cranmer's hand. In its final form it comprises seven canons, falling into two main divisions. The first five concern preachers themselves, while the last two enjoin attendance and good behaviour at sermons.

Its provisions seek to give effect to theological principles, which are briefly stated at the opening of each of these divisions. Preaching, it argues, is 'most necessary'. In a reversal of earlier injunctions which had restrained preaching and substituted the reading of the homilies, the title insists that the power of preaching must be granted to pastors, unless there is good reason why it should be withheld. The church must never be deprived of it, since the main business of Sunday worship 'consists in receiving the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures'.⁹¹

These positive principles justify the strict control of preaching by the diocesan. Confidence in the word of God is accompanied by a strong concern for order in its ministry. It is 'lawful power' which is entrusted with calling men to the task of preaching. The bishop is to take particular account of a candidate's godliness and doctrine. A claim to be full of the Spirit of God is not sufficient. Preachers are forbidden to preach or commend anabaptist or other sectarian teaching, and must avoid bitter argument and ungodly doctrine. The public teaching of error will attract

⁹⁰ R, 7.1-7, TCR, 238-45. The Harleian manuscript has three canons from this title marked by Cranmer for transfer to other titles, but which fail to appear in Foxe's edition. These canons sought to apply the assumptions of the title on the priority of preaching to the specific situations of cathedrals, universities, and towns and villages. Although they do not appear verbatim in the titles Cranmer mentioned - *de divinis officiis*, *de ecclesiis cathedralibus*, and *de academiis* (indeed, the second of these did not feature as a distinct title) - their provisions are mostly included in the titles *de divinis officiis* and *de ecclesia et ministri eius, illorumque officiis*. Thus, the Harleian's fifth canon (*In cathedralibus collegiis quis sit ordo contionum*) is largely superseded by R, 19.1, 19.3, 19.4, and 20.9; the sixth canon (*In academiis ordo quis sit*) partly by R, 19.1; and the seventh (*In oppidis et pagis quis sit ordo*) by R, 19.6, 19.9, and 19.12; Harleian MS 426, 32^v-33^r. This corresponds to the compilation history revealed by the Harleian document: *De contionatoribus* was one of the first twelve titles, with *De divinis officiis* and *De ecclesia* added to the document after Cranmer's first foliation, reflecting a later stage of composition, and after Cranmer's annotations to the earlier title.

⁹¹ R, 7.1, 4, 6, TCR, 238-43; compare the 1547 Edwardian *Injunctions*, DER, 247-57.

discipline for heresy. Further, preachers are to avoid obscure and ambiguous language. When they address moral conduct, they are to denounce vice but not to disclose any individual's 'hidden sins'.⁹² Archbishops, bishops and other dignitaries are both to lead by example in their own devotion to the task of preaching and to encourage others. In particular, each bishop is to hold an annual gathering of licensed preachers in his diocese, 'where he shall instruct them about preaching and learn from them what ills are most frequently met with and in what places, and by what remedies they might most easily be dealt with, so that wrongdoing may be corrected by the common desire of preachers, and godliness spread'.⁹³

The provisions of this title show the determined intention that the first mark of the church would now apply in England. Characteristically, this was to be achieved through the existing ecclesiastical hierarchy. The bishops are the leaders, licensing, encouraging and disciplining a body of clergy whose principal duty was now teaching the message of Scripture. This programme responds to Martyr's concerns over the neglect of this priority, and concurs with his expectation that such reform would be episcopally-led. In its interest in close supervision of preachers, it also reflects the general concern of the magisterial reformers for order in ministerial vocation, and their fear of heterodoxy associated with anabaptism and unregulated 'enthusiasm'. Martyr himself had insisted that it was for the church to be the judge of vocation: the *Reformatio*'s succinct warning to bishops not to accept uncritically those who claim to be full of the Spirit echoes his lengthy refutation of anabaptist arguments for self-calling in the Corinthians commentary. However, it does not repeat his specific arguments, either on the difference between the extraordinary circumstances of the apostolic era and those of the settled church, or on the distinction between general and ministerial vocation.⁹⁴ Moreover, in placing the power of assessing vocation wholly in episcopal hands, the *Reformatio* ignored Martyr's view of the role of the congregation in calling ministers to the service of the church.⁹⁵ Thus in general terms, the provisions of this title correspond to Martyr's priorities, but the details are adapted to the hierarchical shape of England's church polity.

⁹² R, 7.1, 2, 3.

⁹³ R, 7.5, 6; the provision for an annual conference appears to anticipate the more elaborate institution of an annual diocesan synod, which also had a disciplinary purpose, in R, 20.18-23.

⁹⁴ *Cor*, 238^r-239^v; CP IV.1.15-16, 18-19.

⁹⁵ *Cor*, 68^r; cf also CP IV.3.3.

De divinis officiis

This title appears in the Harleian manuscript as one of three, with *De idolatria* and *De sacramentis*, situated immediately after Cranmer's first foliation.⁹⁶ Its association with the title on the sacraments (they are in the same scribal hand) and its incorporation in the final code of some material on preaching originally from *De contionatoribus* demonstrates, as we have indicated, that it was completed later in the drafting process. It comprises sixteen canons. The few amendments on the manuscript are generally by Cranmer.

The purpose of the title is to prescribe the pattern of services used in cathedrals, colleges and parish churches. The first five canons regulate the daily and weekly cathedral and college services.⁹⁷ The following six ordain the pattern for urban parishes. A single canon then adapts this order for rural parishes. Further articles forbid the holding of services and administration of communion in chapels and private houses, with a limited exception for large noble households. The final canon supplements the *Act of Uniformity*, outlawing all worship apart from that of the *Prayer Book*.⁹⁸

The title's purpose is therefore to implement the priority of Scriptural instruction throughout the realm. Its shape and most of its provisions are related to reform, though some articles for cathedral worship originate in medieval canons enforcing clerical attendance at the daily offices. Weekly communion services are commanded, but Sundays and feast days are nevertheless now primarily occasions for instruction in the word of God. Thus in urban parishes, morning prayer is to be followed by the litany, and a sermon then precedes the Lord's Supper. In the afternoon, children and young adults are to be catechised, and baptism administered. The concern to integrate the worship of the cathedrals with that of urban parishes is particularly striking and detailed. Morning sermons in cathedrals are prohibited, so that everyone can attend his parish church.⁹⁹ In such towns, however, each parochial congregation is expected to repair to the cathedral for a further sermon on Sunday afternoon. Evening prayer in the parish church was then

⁹⁶ R, 19.1-16, Harleian MS 426 70^I-75^V; TCR, 334-45.

⁹⁷ For an account of the survival of a distinctive ethos in England's sixteenth-century cathedrals, see Stanford E. Lehmborg, *The Reformation of Cathedrals* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

⁹⁸ 5-6 Edward VI, c.1, 1552. This provision attracted the criticism of John Foxe, in his preface to the 1571 edition, TCR, 164: Nos vero profectum omnis divini cultus magistrum solum Dei Verbum agnoscimus, cum interim in hoc libro non esse nulla constat, quae per omnia minus quadrare ad amussim ecclesiasticae reformationis videantur, multoque rectius fortasse mutarentur.

⁹⁹ R, 19.4, TCR, 336-7.

to be followed by the confession of sin and public penance by offenders. Alms are then accounted for and their distribution settled. Finally, the minister and *seniores* of the parish were to meet privately to discuss church discipline. Provision was also made for the public proclamation of sentences of excommunication.¹⁰⁰

A simplified version of this pattern is prescribed for rural churches. Sermons are for the afternoon, after the catechism and before evening prayer. Only on feast days is there teaching in the morning, accompanying the communion, and consisting of one of the homilies. Evening prayer would be followed by the administration of charity and discipline.¹⁰¹

This order clearly corresponds to Martyr's three-mark doctrine of church life. Preaching, the sacraments, and the exercise of congregational discipline are all prominent, and the first has a clear priority. The concerns of the regime over reluctance to attend the Lord's Supper, which had already caused Cranmer to commission Martyr to write his exhortation for the *Prayer Book*, are reflected in the responsibility placed on the minister to condemn such negligence.¹⁰² Further, though in his 1549 *Sermon on Rebellion* Cranmer had studiously excised the section of Martyr's drafts which called for a regime of catechetical instruction, the *Reformatio* saw this omission made good.

The introduction of provisions for congregational discipline strongly suggests that Martyr's counsel was heeded. The title calls for the public confession of sin and stresses the edifying effect on the congregation of such a process. More tellingly, it also institutes the means for a weekly consultation on how those 'accused of depraved morals and whose evil life has been noted, may first of all be challenged in the gospel by sober and virtuous men, acting in brotherly love according to the commandment of Christ'. Such discussion and discipline is to be carried out by the minister and elders (*seniores*). If their warnings are heeded, no further action is required. Persistence in sin, on the other hand, is expected to lead to more severe treatment 'which we see has been designed by the gospel for their contumacy'.¹⁰³ The allusion to Matthew 18 is oblique, though the expectation is that responsibility for such discipline remains with the minister and elders.

This is a passage without significant antecedents in the English Reformation. The specific mention of public penance suggests the influence of Bucer, and the expectation of its regular employment marks a move away from the aspiration to an

¹⁰⁰ R, 19. 6-11, *TCR*, 338-43.

¹⁰¹ R, 19.12, *TCR*, 343-3.

¹⁰² R, 19.8, *TCR*, 338-41; Beesley (1968), 83-8; *LC* 1067; *PML* 5: 275-6.

¹⁰³ R, 19.10.

annual ceremony envisaged in the *Prayer Books*. But the inclusion of the detailed procedure for parochial discipline particularly suggests Martyr's hand. The mention of elders, without parallel elsewhere in the code, shows that a plural oversight of discipline along Reformed lines was now contemplated. Interestingly, this is otherwise absent from the *Reformatio*. Indeed, the erection of a local procedure for such presbyteral discipline is in contrast with the more traditional provisions of the title *De ecclesiarum gardianis*. In the latter, church wardens are episcopal officers and are instructed to report notorious sinners directly to the bishop.¹⁰⁴ The inconsistency between this title and *De divinis officiis* is repeated elsewhere in the code. As we shall see, the disciplinary provisions of *De divinis officiis* are not easily harmonised with other aspects of the *Reformatio*'s approach.

The cumulative effect of *De divinis officiis* is to reinforce the order introduced by Cranmer's *Prayer Book* reforms, stressing the place of preaching, clarifying its implementation in different contexts, and adding material on discipline. Its provisions are striking for their urban emphasis. The vast majority of parishes and clergy in England were rural. Yet the title assumes an urban setting, and modifies it for the country. This suggests the influence of emerging patterns of ministry in London. Here, as we have noted, there was no shortage of preachers, as even Martyr and Bucer agree, and the influence of continental models was strongest. Indeed, Martyr's knowledge of the practices of the cities of Strasbourg and Zürich, and other reformed polities, qualified him as the most knowledgeable member of the drafting committee in this area. Taken with the atypical emphasis on locally-administered discipline, this characteristic reinforces the suspicion that his hand was prominent in the drafting of this title.

De ecclesia et ministris eius, illorumque officiis

The relationship we have observed in the last two titles between the *Reformatio*'s view of church order and Protestant ecclesiology is also evident in this, the twentieth title.¹⁰⁵ In the Harleian draft, it also appears in Cranmer's second foliation, and is one of the six titles in the same scribal hand as the initial fourteen.¹⁰⁶ In Foxe's edition it is placed immediately after *De divinis officiis*.

It is a long title, comprising twenty-three canons. While its heading, *De ecclesia*, is

¹⁰⁴ R, 21, 1, TCR, 370-1.

¹⁰⁵ R, 20.1-23, Harleian MS 426, 91^r-99^r; TCR, 346-69.

¹⁰⁶ For example, in R, 20.1, Haddon proposes replacing the phrase *post unam atque alteram admonitionem* with *cum semel atque iterum admonitus fuerit*. TCR, 346.

without precedent in the main headings of the medieval canon law, its exclusive concern with the ministers of the church indicate that it was intended to replace the traditional canons governing office-holders. However, in a decisive break with medieval precedent, it makes no qualitative or ontological distinction between lay officers and clergy. Their duties alone are what differentiate them. The structure of the title itself indicates this. Thus, the opening canons, *De aedituis* and *De oeconomis sive gardianis ecclesiarum et sacellorum*, describe the duties of parish clerks and church-wardens, while later canons outline the responsibilities of bishops and archbishops.

Within the descriptions of the duties of the retained orders of deacon, priest and bishop, there are indications that their ministry was nevertheless to differ from traditional patterns. The deacon's office is reformed in a manner reminiscent of Calvin's *Ecclesiastical Ordinances* and Bucer's *De Regno Christi*. Though he attends the pastor in the services, and his office remains preparatory to the presbyterate, he is specifically described as *patronus pauperum*. Further, his main duties resemble those outlined by Bucer: investigating the condition of the needy, and assisting in their relief and comfort, although Bucer's inclusion of responsibility for discipline is omitted.¹⁰⁷

The qualifications which the *Reformatio* specifies for presbyteral office are the Pauline ones of I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Teaching the 'flock of God', nurturing it in obedience to both God and magistrate, and encouraging mutual love are the minister's principal duties.¹⁰⁸ No mention is made of a sacramental role. Rather, he is to be devoted to study, preaching and prayer. In all these functions, he is to be closely supervised. Though Bucer's proposals for the appointment of assistant bishops for every twenty parishes are ignored, the role of rural deans and archdeacons as superintendents of the work of the parish officers, clerical and lay, and of moral discipline, is strongly emphasised.¹⁰⁹

Over half of the title's canons concern the episcopate. In terms recalling Martyr's own writings, bishops hold 'the chief place among the other ministers of the church'. They are 'servants of the servants of God'.¹¹⁰ The bishop is the chief minister of the word in his diocese, where he is obliged to reside. His authority is specifically for pastoral ends: so that as many as possible 'may be joined to Christ'; in order that those who are already his 'may grow in him and be built up'; and in order that those

¹⁰⁷ R, 20.3. Cf Melancthon and Bucer, LCC 19 (1969), 306-9.

¹⁰⁸ R, 20.4.

¹⁰⁹ R, 20.5-6; Bucer's proposals for the reform of episcopal ministry are set out in *De Regno Christi*, in Melancthon and Bucer, LCC 19 (1969), 284-95.

¹¹⁰ R, 20.10.

who fall may be 'restored by salutary penance'.¹¹¹ Though bishops are to foster harmony, they are also owed obedience to all they command, provided it coincides either with the word or with episcopal ordinances and ecclesiastical laws.¹¹² Further, the bishop is to be active in the ministry of his cathedral church and in governing and visiting his see, and is the principal judge of ecclesiastical causes. Much of this perpetuates the traditional episcopal role: he not only confirms those who have been catechised, for example, but also proves wills. However, the heart of the office is now his responsibility as the leader and guardian of an evangelical church order.¹¹³

This is epitomised in the provisions of the *Reformatio* for an annual diocesan synod. Described as 'the most perfect medicine for castigating negligence and removing errors', this meeting is envisaged as the means by which 'the links and the love between the bishop and his clergy may be increased and preserved'.¹¹⁴ It may reflect an adaptation of Bucer's suggestion that every diocesan should administer with a sworn council of presbyters and deacons.¹¹⁵ The synod in the *Reformatio* is an instrument of pastoral debate, instruction and discipline. It provides a means of correcting false doctrine, settling controversy, clarifying understanding, asserting the rightful place of ceremonies, and discussing 'whatever seems to relate to the benefit of the people of God'. These provisions have no clear precedent in Martyr's thought. Nevertheless, they are consistent with his aristocratic approach: we have seen how he envisaged a place for councils in the government of the church, and though he does not discuss such regular meetings of bishop and clergy, he was familiar both with Bucer's prescription and Strasbourg's practice.

Summary

These three titles intended to impose a new uniformity on the weekly life of the church in England. They reveal more clearly than any other document the order which Cranmer and his colleagues envisaged for it. In them, the *Reformatio* provided the legal framework for the top-down implementation of evangelical principles of church life: the priority of the ministry of the Word, encouraged and enforced through the church's episcopal superintendents. If the authority on which this plan was to be enacted was royal, its pattern was evangelical. However, though the

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² R, 20.11.

¹¹³ R, 20.12-15; on the conception of bishops as superintendents in the Edwardian Reformation, see Carleton (2001), 50-2.

¹¹⁴ R, 20.19-23, *TCR*, 364-9.

¹¹⁵ *De Regno Christi*, in *Melanchthon and Bucer*, LCC 19 (1969), 288, 294-5.

titles indicate that this order would include a new parochial discipline, subsequent material suggests that, late in the day, the drafters settled for a surprisingly traditional approach.

Discipline

The approach of the Reformatio

The implementation of the *Reformatio* would have revived and transformed the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline in England. Particularly by comparison with the Henrician canons, the code's provision for it was extensive. Responsibility for administering discipline was enjoined on church officers. Bishops, archdeacons and rural deans were expected to supervise its exercise, and the pages of the *Reformatio* include detailed descriptions of its system.

Five titles are devoted to a comprehensive treatment of the subject. Their headings are: *De poenis ecclesiasticis*; *De suspensione*; *De deprivatione*; *De excommunicatione*; and *Formula reconciliationis excommunicatorum*.¹¹⁶ With the significant exception of the last, the least traditional in both form and theology, all were late additions, and are absent from Harleian MS 426. Their headings show that the drafters settled for a conservative approach to the question. With some qualifications, this is confirmed by the content of the individual titles. Moreover, though there is some dependence on the Henrician canons, much of this material was freshly drafted in 1552, even where it drew on earlier precedent.¹¹⁷ We shall see that while the excommunication titles combine both inherited and Reformed emphases, the three other titles are almost wholly traditional in their approach. Accordingly, the disciplinary provisions of the *Reformatio* were in the end closer to medieval precedent than evangelical practice.

A few examples illustrate this. *De poenis ecclesiasticis* draws extensively on the thirteenth title of the Henrician canons, *De publicis paenitentiis et aliis poenis ecclesiasticis*.¹¹⁸ Some amendments reflecting evangelical views are made: penance is replaced by other punishments, notably imprisonment, and where a monetary

¹¹⁶ R, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33; TCR, 442-53, 458-91.

¹¹⁷ Bray correctly comments that the disciplinary titles are 'largely traditional in content', but his suggestion that they are heavily dependent on the Henrician canons requires some qualification. *De suspensione*, for example, draws on much traditional material, but has few antecedents in the 1535 code. TCR, lxxv-vi, cxi.

¹¹⁸ HC, 13, TCR, 48-51.

commutation of penalty is reluctantly allowed, the payment is to be made into the common chest. However, most of its canons are simplified versions of the 1535 version, and explicitly retain its medieval, penal approach. Ecclesiastical penalties are punishments judicially imposed on criminals in equitable retribution for their offences.¹¹⁹

The case of *De suspensione* indicates even more clearly the preference for a traditional approach.¹²⁰ Whereas the 1535 draft code had largely overlooked the historic distinction between *excommunicatio minor* and *major*, the *Reformatio* reintroduces it, with new terminology. Most of the canons in this title are fresh compositions designed to reintroduce a lesser category of ecclesiastical penalties, judicially exercised. Suspension provides the ecclesiastical judge with a sanction less severe than excommunication itself, and of variable severity. The punishment applies to minor crimes, exempt from excommunication, and involves varying degrees of 'relegation from sacred things', including sacramental exclusion.¹²¹ Works of satisfaction can be imposed. Finally, if an offender does not satisfy the judge that he has fulfilled the terms of his suspension within a year, the 'horrible punishment of excommunication' follows.¹²²

The evidence of these titles shows that the drafters of the *Reformatio* had little intention of following the continental repudiation of the medieval disciplinary inheritance. The evangelical emphasis on Matthew 18, on the place of brotherly correction, and on the intent of the whole process to secure repentance and restoration, is muted. Though the titles on excommunication slightly modify this impression, they do not tilt the balance. If an alternative, evangelical model was considered in the autumn of 1552, it was rejected. The *Reformatio's* provisions rather represent the reassertion of a traditional, penal approach to church discipline.

Excommunication

Excommunication is mentioned on numerous occasions in the *Reformatio*. The references fall into three main categories. First it is specified as the penalty for a number of ecclesiastical offences. Second, a small number of canons deal with judicial procedures for the sentence. Finally, two lengthy titles address the subject

¹¹⁹ R, 28, *TCR*, 442-47.

¹²⁰ R, 29, *TCR*, 448-53.

¹²¹ R, 29.1, 2, *TCR*, 448-49.

¹²² R 29. 2, 4, *TCR*, 448-51.

directly.¹²³ As well as providing an illuminating study into the imperfect correlation of Cranmer's project with its continental sisters, the subject illustrates a number of features of the *Reformatio*. These include the coexistence within the code of a variety of approaches to discipline, and a related tension between 'descending' and 'ascending' notions of authority.

The first two categories shed light on the assumptions of the drafters concerning the place of the sanction in church. Excommunication is indiscriminately specified throughout the code as the normal punishment for a range of ecclesiastical misdemeanours, both moral and procedural. Thus it is not only decreed in the third title, *De iudiciis contra haereses*, as the appropriate sanction for contumacious heretics.¹²⁴ It is also to be employed, for example, against those who refuse to answer a summons for heresy, for divination and sorcery, for seducers of women, for church wardens who neglect their duties, and for the assault of clerics.¹²⁵ Further, its use is governed throughout by rules of jurisprudence: the sanction in the *Reformatio* is not a congregational sentence but an episcopally supervised judicial process.¹²⁶

Turning to the two substantive titles on excommunication, it is immediately apparent that they are uneasy partners. The principal title on the sanction, *De excommunicatione*, was one of the final eight titles added after the completion of Harleian MS 426. It was a fresh composition for the *Reformatio* and consists of sixteen canons. Even those provisions which resemble the 1535 draft were recast in 1552.¹²⁷ But Harleian MS 426 anticipated this comprehensive new title with an earlier work, so unique in its form that it appears to be an uncomfortable intruder in a legal code: the *Formula reconciliationis excommunicatorum*. Immediately following *De excommunicatione* in the final version of the *Reformatio*, the *Formula* is a lengthy liturgical rite for the public reconciliation of excommunicates.¹²⁸ It provides a full liturgy for the restoration of a penitent to the fellowship of the local congregation. It is not only unlike any other title in the *Reformatio*, but has no clear antecedent or

¹²³ R, 32, *De excommunicatione*, TCR, 462-75; R, 33, *Formula reconciliationis excommunicatorum*, TCR, 476-91.

¹²⁴ R, 3.4, TCR, 218-19.

¹²⁵ R, 3.2, 6.1, 8.3, 26.5, 48.1, TCR, 214-17, 232-3, 246-9, 406-7, 640-1.

¹²⁶ For examples of the code's attention to the judicial processes of excommunication, see R, 52.11-12, 54.47, 58-9, TCR, 676-7, 726-7, 730-1.

¹²⁷ Eg, the two canons R, 32.4, *Excommunicanda persona debet ante sententiam admoneri*, and R, 32.5, *Universitas aut collegium non potest excommunicari*, both derive from HC, 14.12, but are entirely rewritten; TCR, 56-7, 464-5.

¹²⁸ Harleian MS 426, 83^r-89^r; TCR, 476-91. In the Harleian MS the title is in the same scribal hand as the nineteen titles dealing with doctrine, benefices, marriage, ministers and education. However, it was included after Cranmer's initial numeration of the first fourteen of these titles; TCR, lv-lvi.

parallel in either of the Edwardian *Prayer Books*. The authorship and contents of this rite are discussed below. Its presence in the Harleian manuscript indicates the significance attached by the drafting committee to the pastoral needs of a church actively exercising a moral discipline. Its incorporation in advance of the inclusion of *De excommunicatione* is more perplexing, indicating the committee's early recognition of the need to address discipline, yet preceding agreement on the substantive excommunication title. Probably the early inclusion of the *Formula* indicates that a draft was already to hand. Its Latin authorship makes unlikely the suggestion that it was originally composed for the second *Prayer Book*, but arrived too late to be included in time for the book's parliamentary scrutiny during the reading of the second Edwardian Act of Uniformity which began in early March 1552.¹²⁹ Clearly, however, the drafters of the *Reformatio* found it easier to accept the *Formula's* provisions than they did to agree on the legal details.

There are few textual clues to Martyr's involvement in the drafting of the material on excommunication. The substantive title is known only from Foxe's printing, while editorial amendments to the manuscript *Formula* are in an unknown hand. We have seen how in *De iudiciis contra haereses* Martyr originally suggested an addition to the canon dealing with the treatment of contumacious heretics after they have been turned over to the civil power.¹³⁰ Other manuscript evidence is wanting. Martyr's influence is accordingly principally to be traced by comparing the substantive titles with his known views.

How far does the treatment of excommunication in the *Reformatio* correspond to Martyr's own exposition? In a conscious move away from the provisions of medieval canon law, several aspects of a Reformed approach are adopted. However, while on a number of points, the document most clearly reflects Martyr's position, on others the voice of Martin Bucer, in the *De Regno Christi*, is more distinctly heard.¹³¹ Yet these evangelical voices are also, not always harmoniously, accompanied by other notes, some of which resonate more strongly with late medieval assumptions and practices. In particular, the penal approach to the

¹²⁹ David Loades, 'Thomas Cranmer and John Dudley: an uneasy alliance, 1549-53', in Ayris & Selwyn (1993), 168; MacCulloch (1996), 504.

¹³⁰ R, 3.4, *TCR*, 218-19, n12.

¹³¹ Bucer's approach to discipline in the treatise is distinctive, and corresponds in detail neither to that of the *Reformatio* nor to Martyr's, though they shared the conviction that discipline was an essential mark of the church. Bucer analyses the ministry of discipline under three heads: life and manners, which corresponds quite closely to Martyr's emphasis on *correctio fraterna*; the discipline of penitence, where he emphasises the public display of penitence for sin as the end and focus of excommunication, which is not a description he specifically employs; and the discipline of ceremonies, which is the orderly arrangement of the externals of public worship. *Melanchthon and Bucer*, LCC 19 (1969), 240-56.

sanction which characterises the code as a whole persists throughout the substantive title. The dominant impression is that the *Reformatio* tends to view excommunication not as the salutary medicine of the Reformation's prescription, but rather as the vibrating thunder of ecclesiastically-mediated divine wrath.

Definitions

The definition of excommunication with which the *Reformatio*'s title opens signals both the similarities and the differences of emphasis between its approach and Martyr's. His own understanding was simple and bears restatement:

Excommunication is the expulsion, by the judgment of the elders and with the agreement of the whole church, of an offender from the society of believers, on the authority of Christ and according to the rule of holy Scripture, with a view to the salvation both of the one who is expelled and of the people of God.¹³²

Compare the opening chapter of the *Reformatio* title:

Excommunication (for it is better to express it in poor Latin than to express it poorly) is the power and authority conveyed to the church by God, which bars wicked persons, or those who have a corrupt understanding of our religion and persist in their error, from the reception of the sacraments, and also from the society of Christians, until they recover their senses and give appropriate signs of their salutary opinions, and also submit to ecclesiastical penalties, by which the lust of the flesh is repressed in order that the spirit might be saved.¹³³

This is a fresh composition, on clearly evangelical lines, and with only remote links

¹³² *Cor*, 66^{r-v}: Excommunicatio est facinorosi eiectio a fidelium societate, iudicio primorum atque tota Ecclesia consentiente, auctoritate Christi at Scripturae sanctae regula ad salutem eius qui eiicitur, et populi Dei.

¹³³ *R*, 32, 1, *TCR*, 462-3: Excommunicatio (melius est enim parum Latine quam parum apte loqui) potestas est et auctoritas ad ecclesiam a Deo profecta, quae facinorosas personas, vel de religione nostra corrupte sentientes, et ad suam improbitatem adhaerentes, a perceptione sacramentorum, et etiam Christianorum fratrum usu, tantisper summovet, donec sensus sanos recollegerint, et salutarium cogitationum apta signa dederint, et poenas etiam ecclesiasticas adierint, quibus ferocia carnis compromitur, ut spiritus salvus fiat.

with canonical precedents.¹³⁴ It reveals the adoption of the reformers' position that the occasion of the sanction, biblically understood, was persistent sin or heresy, and that its nature corresponded to the canonical 'greater excommunication'. However, despite this deliberate alignment with the concerns of the Reformation, its expression and emphases are different to Martyr's. For both, authority to use the sanction is explicitly God-given, while it applies to both moral conduct and heretical opinion. Nevertheless, whereas for Martyr excommunication is the act and state of banishment, the *Reformatio* conceives of it primarily as a power possessed by the church. Though the code maintains a restorative function for discipline, reference to ecclesiastical penalties means the punitive character of excommunication receives greater emphasis. For Martyr on the other hand the object of the sanction is always salvific, for both the offender and the church. Further, the terminology of the *Reformatio*, counterposing the 'repression' of the flesh and the salvation of the spirit, while it reflects the language of I Corinthians 5, is not close to Martyr's conception of the purposes of excommunication as to effect a whole-hearted repentance or conversion of the sinner.

The *Reformatio* also diverges in its description of the effects of excommunication. For Martyr, exclusion from the company of believers is the primary consequence of the sanction. Eucharistic exclusion is secondary, notwithstanding the significance of the sacraments in his theology. The *Reformatio's* definition, on the other hand, heralds the approach of the whole title: excommunication primarily excludes from the Lord's table, and its social consequences are secondary.¹³⁵

Excommunication and church discipline

We have seen how the provisions of *De divinis officiis* for the weekly exercise of congregational discipline by the minister acting together with elders was clearly indebted to the reformers' aspirations for a functioning parochial discipline

¹³⁴ TCR footnotes the *Liber extra* as a source for the opening canon, but its citation relates simply to the distinction which is made there between *excommunicatio major* and *excommunicatio minor*: *Liber extra* 5.39.59, Si quem sub hac forma verborum: "Illum excommunico," vel simili, a iudice suo excommunicari contingat, dicendum est, eum non tantum minori, quae a perceptione sacramentorum, sed etiam maiori excommunicatione, quae a communione fidelium separat, esse ligatum. *R & F*, II, 912.

¹³⁵ Further evidence of Martyr's relative distance from the composition of this title in the *Reformatio* is suggested by the curious parenthetical comment in its first sentence. Most plausibly the observation of a Latin grammarian, presumably Sir Walter Haddon, Master of Trinity Hall, who though not a member of the commission appears to have been employed to cast its drafting into the best humanist Latin, it is certainly not the sort of comment which Martyr would have thought necessary to make: he was always content to use the late Latin term.

exercised jointly by minister and lay elders.¹³⁶ In its relative informality it recalls both Bucer's call for 'the discipline of life and manners' in the *De Regno Christi* and the pastoral spirit of Martyr's own observations on *correctio fraterna*. However, in the title on excommunication itself, the *Reformatio* does not follow Martyr in linking the sanction with brotherly correction. Indeed, the disciplinary provisions of the two titles are independent of each other. The *De divinis officiis* assumption that the church will have a number of *seniores* with whom the minister will consult finds no echo in *De excommunicatione*. Moreover, although the former title envisages more severe treatment for offenders who do not heed such warnings, it does not explicitly connect this with excommunication.

The *De excommunicatione* title itself, though included later than *De divinis officiis*, makes no reference to the earlier material. Indeed, although it provides for the involvement of the offender's minister alongside the ecclesiastical judge in administering the sanction, it is the latter who bears responsibility for admonition as well as executing judgment. In what is clearly a remedy against precipitate sentencing by officials as well as an occasion for repentance by sinners, opportunity for correction is to be given by the judge up to three times. The title does not specify whether this supersedes or supplements the parochial disciplinary process, but ignores it altogether. Indeed, in its focus on the judicial responsibilities of the ecclesiastical judge, it is reminiscent of the very comparable provisions of the medieval canon law on this subject, perhaps mediated through the 1535 draft canon on excommunication, suggesting that the hand of one of the commission's civilians was primary in the drafting of this chapter.¹³⁷

The third chapter is devoted to the question, 'the cases in which excommunication must be applied'.¹³⁸ Under the medieval canon law, the scope of the sanction was wide, though we have noted how its use as an instrument of moral censure had been eclipsed by its employment by the church courts as a means of enforcing their

¹³⁶ R, 19.10, TCR, 340-3.

¹³⁷ R, 32.4, TCR, 464-5; the canonical provisions include principally *Liber Sextus*, 5.11.9, R & F, II, 1101-2: Constitutionem felicitis recordationis Innocentii Papae IV praedecessoris nostri, quae prohibet, participantes excommunicatis ea participatione, quae solam minorem excommunicationem inducit, monitione canonica non praemissa maiori excommunicatione ligari, decernens, promulgatam aliter excommunicationis sententiam non tenere, ad tollendum omnem ambiguitatis scrupulum declarantes, decernimus, ita demum esse monitionem canonicam in hos casu, si aliis rite servatis eos, qui monentur, exprimat nominatim. Statuimus quoque, ut inter monitiones, quas ut canonice promulgetur excommunicationis sententia, statuunt iura praemitti, iudices, sive monitionibus tribus utantur sive una pro omnibus, observent aliquorum dierum competentia intervalla, nisi facti necessitas aliter ea suaserit moderanda. Cf also *Liber Sextus* 5.11.5, R & F, II, 1095, which lies behind some of the provisions of HC, 14.12, TCR, 56-7.

¹³⁸ *Cor*, 66^v-67^r; R, 32.3, TCR, 462-5.

process and of defending clerical status.¹³⁹ In England, the sanction could also be used against those who infringed royal rights.¹⁴⁰ In 1553, all this was swept aside:

Excommunication must not be used for minor offences, but is to be reserved for the wickedness of horrible crimes, by which the church endures the most grievous disrepute, either because religion is overturned by them or because good morals are perverted.¹⁴¹

Here the influence of the reformers' drive to strip church discipline of its medieval accretions is plain. Adoption of this standard represents an abrupt departure both from medieval theory and practice, and from the 1535 draft canons. 'Horrible crimes' are specifically identified as those moral offences which exclude the offender from the kingdom of God and attract his wrath, as described in the Pauline 'vice lists' of I Corinthians 6.9-10, Galatians 5.19-21 and the twin passages of Ephesians 5.5-6 and Colossians 3.5-6. The chapter alludes to these passages, and specifically provides that excommunication is to be used against persistent offenders. It is those who ignore 'healthy warnings', and who either fail to appear to answer charges against them, or ignore judicial admonition, who are subject to the ban.¹⁴²

While the last principle was commonplace in both medieval canon law and the reformers' pastoral practice, it is the specification of the Pauline vice lists which shows the intentions of the compilers to have been evangelical. Martyr's own definition mentions the Ephesians and Colossians passages, though the *Reformatio* is silent on his governing principle, that the discipline of excommunication is to be used against those whose deeds deny their profession of Christ. On the other hand, both *De excommunicatione* and one of the doctrinal titles, *De Iudiciis contra haereses*, concur with Martyr that excommunication should be employed against persistent heterodoxy.¹⁴³

Thus, some of the offences against which excommunication is prescribed correspond to Martyr's treatment, so far as he stands with the reformers' general approach. However, the *Reformatio* does not show a distinctive alignment with his particular definitions. Moreover, notwithstanding the clear intent to restore excommunication to its original place in the ancient discipline of the church, the *De excommunicatione*

¹³⁹ Vodola (1986), 36-8, 191-3.

¹⁴⁰ Lyndwood's 1433 *Provinciale* cites the 1279 Council of Reading canon. *Inter alia*, this decrees the use of excommunication against disturbers of the king's peace, bearers of false witness, advocates who hinder the processes of church justice, any who infringe the rights of true church patrons or act against the provisions of Magna Carta; Lyndwood, 5.17.6.

¹⁴¹ R, 32.3, TCR, 462-3.

¹⁴² R, 32.3, TCR, 462-5.

¹⁴³ R, 3, TCR, 214-23; the following title, *De Blasphemia*, prescribes the same treatment for blasphemers as for heretics, R, 4, TCR, 224-5).

as well as the titles dealing with procedure in the ecclesiastical courts and the rights of the church, assume the continuation of its parallel use as a penalty against contumacy and against trespass on other rights. In *De iuramentis*, for example, refusal to take a judicially prescribed oath risks the sanction; in *De violenta percussione clericorum*, it is the penalty for striking a clergyman.¹⁴⁴ Thus, the *Reformatio* bears the marks of legal and social conservatism as well as reforming idealism.

This is also the case in its underlying theology. Martyr's understanding of excommunication as the ecclesiastical declaration of inward spiritual apostasy is entirely lacking from the *Reformatio*. The notion that excommunication as well as the public reconciliation of the sinner should recognise, publicise and give outward effect to his spiritual condition is absent. Its language is accordingly less measured: excommunication is rather the sentence which cuts off the sinner from the body of Christ and ultimately consigns to perdition, as the minister is to declare:

by reading the sentence of excommunication he shall inform the people that the person so restricted ought to be thrown out of the church as if he were a corpse, and not partake of the Lord's supper, or attend the divine services, or associate with Christians, but should be thrown out of the bosom of the church, the common mother of Christians, and amputated from the body of Christ and shunned by heaven and earth alike, bound over to the devil and his equally wicked servants, and consigned to the eternal tortures of the flames unless he effects his salvation from the bonds of Satan.¹⁴⁵

Though the *Reformatio* does envisage reconciliation as the object of the sanction, such realist language is alien to Martyr, whose understanding of the church's power to bind and loose was that it gives expression to the spiritual binding or loosing already in place. The *Reformatio* ignores his distinction between the two *communiones*: the first inward between God and man, and ruptured by sin; the second external, governed by the church, and both sacramental and social. Further, in his commentary on I Corinthians 5.5, Martyr's understanding of the language of 'handing over to Satan' and the 'destruction of the flesh' is less literal than the *Reformatio's* reference to these texts. For him, they refer not to eternal realities, but are rather hyperbolic expressions of the defection of the sinner from his proper allegiance. The language of the *Reformatio* makes no such qualifications.¹⁴⁶

Turning to the impact of the sanctions in practice, the *Reformatio's* provisions are

¹⁴⁴ R, 39.8, 48.1, TCR, 552-3, 640-1.

¹⁴⁵ R, 32.9, TCR, 468-9.

¹⁴⁶ Cor, 63r-v.

traditional. The excommunicate is excluded from the sacraments and from all divine services. Normal social intercourse is also forbidden, though he is not excluded from his own home nor denied the means of life. Contact for the pastoral purpose of urging repentance is permitted. Apart from such exceptions, those who deal with excommunicates risk the same fate.¹⁴⁷ With the exception of the last, these provisions mirror Martyr's approach in their correspondence to the universal view that excommunication involves the treatment of the offender as a pagan or tax collector. However, whereas for Martyr it is the social exclusion of the sinner which is the focus of the sanction, the *Reformatio* retains the primacy of sacramental exclusion. It also lacks the repeated emphasis on the church's continued pastoral concern for the lapsed believer which characterises Martyr's approach. Some contact with an excommunicate is permissible 'to admonish him and to turn him back to righteousness' and in the *Formula reconciliationis* elaborate provision is made for the reconciliation of the repentant offender.¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, excommunication in the *Reformatio* is a 'vibrating thunderbolt' as much as a pastoral sanction.¹⁴⁹ Martyr's emphasis on the church's continued responsibility to labour for his salvation is conspicuously absent.

Authority to bind and loose

One of the most distinctive features of Martyr's conception of discipline is that it is the responsibility of every believer. Though this was a position shared on *correctio fraterna* at least by Bucer, Martyr consistently argued that even the exercise of excommunication was a congregational act.¹⁵⁰ Excommunication, absolution and the choice of ministers are serious matters which can be decided only with the consent of the church.¹⁵¹ This conception of the nature of authority in the church finds only a vestigial echo in the *Reformatio*. Agreeing with the reformers that the power to excommunicate should not be exercised by one man alone, the sixth canon of the *De*

¹⁴⁷ R, 32.10, TCR, 468-71; compare the provisions of Article 32 of the *Forty-Two Articles*, *Excommunicati vitandi sunt: Qui per publicam Ecclesiae denuntiationem rite ab unitate Ecclesiae praecisus et excommunicatus, is ab universa fidelium multitudine, donec per paenitentiam publice reconciliatus fuerit arbitrio iudicis competentis, habendus est tamquam ethnicus et publicanus.*

¹⁴⁸ R, 32.10, R, 33, TCR, 468-9, 476-91.

¹⁴⁹ Eg, R, 29.2, TCR, 449: *cum iudex in minore delicto fulmen excommunicationis vibrandi non portat . . .* See also R, 6.1, TCR, 233, and R, 19.11, TCR, 343 for descriptions of excommunication as thunder.

¹⁵⁰ *De Regno Christi*, in *Melanchthon and Bucer*, LCC 19 (1969), 240: The discipline of life and manners consists in this, that not only the public ministers of churches (though these principally) but even individual Christians should exercise a care for their neighbours.

¹⁵¹ USD, 139-44, 154-57; PML 1: 66-8, 71-2; Cor, 66^r, 67^v-68^r, 69^r.

excommunicatione title hints at Martyr's principle of congregational consent:

For although the agreement of the whole church would in principle be preferable, nevertheless, because it can be difficult to gather and obtain, excommunication shall proceed as follows.¹⁵²

The second canon, anticipating this obstacle, had placed the authority firmly in clerical hands:

just as the administration of the sacraments and the task of preaching from the Holy Scriptures is reserved for certain men, so the power to excommunicate resides in the ministers and governors of the churches, that by the teaching and rule of the Holy Scriptures they may impose discipline in the most sacred supper of the Lord, and determine which persons ought to be excluded from the divine table and which are to be admitted to it; and the following are the moderators and leaders of the churches: the archbishops, bishops, archdeacons, deans, and finally whoever have been appointed to this office by the church¹⁵³

In practice, an ecclesiastical judge was to exercise this power in conjunction with a magistrate (*publicae pacis nostrae custodem*), as well as with the offender's minister and two or three other 'learned and respectable presbyters'. The power which in Martyr's thought is ultimately congregational, and distinct from the temporal authority, is thus in the *Reformatio* exercised jointly by clergy and magistrate.¹⁵⁴ While for Martyr, church leaders could excommunicate only with congregational consent, under the *Reformatio* on the other hand, their partnership is with the magistrate.

Magisterial reluctance to countenance ecclesiastical disciplinary autonomy was the Reformation norm. It is unsurprising to find that in England, where the church had traditionally sought the support of the Crown to lend teeth to its discipline, a reform programme so dependent on royal initiative settled for the status quo. Indeed, the *Reformatio* proposed to perpetuate the medieval practice of invoking the royal criminal jurisdiction to arrest and imprison excommunicates who were

¹⁵² R, 32.6, TCR, 464-7; the original reads: Totius ecclesiae consensus quanquam imprimis esset optabilis. Compare *Cor*, 66^r: tota ecclesia consentiente.

¹⁵³ R, 32.2, TCR, 462-3.

¹⁵⁴ *Cor*, 68^r: Deinde magistratus punit saepius pecunia, certo exilio et carcere ad tempus, quibus poenis depensis, cives restituit, neque poenitentiam ullam requirit: Ecclesia vero minime potest nisi poenitentes reconciliare. Non itaque confundantur potestates. Alia esto civilis, alia esto ecclesiastica.

unrepentant for more than forty days by the writ *de excommunicato capiendo*.¹⁵⁵ Here again is an example of how continuity with the past prevailed over the blueprint offered by the Edwardian regime's foreign guests.

Restoration

The *Reformatio* in principle agrees with Martyr that excommunication is a sanction whose purpose is achieved when the offender turns from his sin and, being received back into fellowship, is reconciled to the church. However, while Martyr focuses on both the inward and external aspects of this restoration, the *Reformatio's* attention is almost exclusively directed to the visible aspect. In the fourteenth chapter of the title, for example, repeated stress is laid on the need for the penitent to make good the damage he has done to the church. Excommunicates are required to restore, as far as possible, the 'violated peace and integrity of the church', to 'give full satisfaction' to any they have offended, and specifically to perform the 'penalty ordered by the judge'. Only after he has 'performed all his duty' is the offender led into church to be absolved by an authorised minister and readmitted to the full fellowship of the church.¹⁵⁶

These provisions were fresh compositions in 1552-53, and represent an expansion of the traditional prescriptions of the *Corpus iuris canonici*.¹⁵⁷ Their content owes more to the approach of the reformers than to medieval precedent, though they correspond to Bucer's thought more than to Martyr's. In the *De Regno Christi*, Bucer particularly insists on the need for this 'discipline of penance'. Repentance is seen in its fruits and it is necessary for the church to inspect the evidence before welcoming the prodigal.¹⁵⁸ Martyr's approach was different. We have seen how neither in 1544 nor in 1551 did he envisage any delay between the profession of repentance and its ecclesial recognition. The purpose of excommunication was achieved when its primary object, the restoration of the sinner's inward communion with God, had been attained.¹⁵⁹ The church ought not to delay in recognising this.

¹⁵⁵ R, 32.13, TCR, 470-3; cf Lyndwood, 3.28.5: wherefore honourable antiquity doth inform us that if excommunicate persons arrogantly cast off from them with hard heart the benefit of humility and the desire of reconciling, the King's power called in to help is bound by the due rigour of justice to keep in prison such rebellious.

¹⁵⁶ R, 32.14, TCR, 472-5.

¹⁵⁷ TCR, 472 n17, cites *Liber Extra* 5.38.5 and 5.39.13 in connection with R, 32.14. However, both of these canons are exceptionally brief; R & F, II, 885, 893. Compare also HC, 14, *De sententia excommunicationis*.

¹⁵⁸ *De Regno Christi*, in *Melanchthon and Bucer*, LCC 19 (1969), 243-6.

¹⁵⁹ *Cor*, 69^r: Estque potissimum inventa excommunicatio ad illius praecipuae interiorisque cum Deo communionis instaurationem.

The need for the church to act with mercy and charity towards the excommunicate extends to being quick to be reconciled, on the example of 2 Corinthians 2.5-11.¹⁶⁰

However, while in the *De excommunicatione* title itself, the *Reformatio* differs from Martyr over the treatment of penitents, in the *Formula reconciliationis excommunicatorum* it corresponds to his approach more closely.¹⁶¹ This lengthy liturgical piece accords with Martyr's view that the restoration of the sinner to the church requires the consent of the congregation, given in a 'public and solemn act'.¹⁶² Further, its form, nature and circumstances of its inclusion all strongly suggest he was prominent in its drafting.

The *Formula* provides for a liturgical sequence of exchanges between minister, offender, and congregation in the context of the normal, weekly communion service. It proceeds from an introductory section, via a lengthy homily on sin, forgiveness and repentance, to two statements by the excommunicate. In the first, he makes a public confession and petition for divine mercy. In the second, he petitions the congregation for pardon and reconciliation. The minister then asks the congregation two questions: first, if they are willing to pardon his guilt and commend him to God, and second, whether they will receive him back into their number. Congregational assent being given, the minister, described throughout as *pastor*, absolves the sinner with the agreement of the church. The *Formula* concludes with a doxology and an admonition to the reconciled sinner.

Internal evidence points to Martyr as one author of this remarkable liturgical composition. It bears no trace of the judicial phraseology of the *De excommunicatione* title. Rather, its tenor is pastoral and conciliatory, with scarcely any reference to the penal character which excommunication bears elsewhere in the *Reformatio*. Similarly absent are references to the provision of satisfaction or restitution, or to the 'discipline of penance', despite the emphasis on these in the *De excommunicatione* title. The focus of the minister's homily falls, rather, on the destructive nature of sin, the mercy of God in recognising and accepting an offender's genuine repentance, and the necessity for the congregation to adopt a similarly merciful attitude.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 69^v: Deinde cum resipuerit qui ab Ecclesia separatus fuerat, reconcilietur, ut Paulus epistola 2 ad Corinthios hortatur: quod leniter summa cum benevolentia et charitate fieri debet; PML 1: 72

¹⁶¹ R, 33, TCR, 476-91.

¹⁶² USD, 156; PML 1: 72: This absolution, performed by the Church through a solemn and public act with prayers and supplications, results in God's forgiving whatever is loosed by the church.

The *Formula's* emphasis on congregational involvement and consent also corresponds to Martyr's position. In the *De excommunicatione* title this makes no appearance in the prescribed procedure for the lifting of the sentence. The decision of the judge is simply announced by the minister once the conditions for restoration have been met. In the *Formula* on the other hand, this emphasis is reversed: though the bishop's assent to absolution is mentioned, and he decrees the occasion of its announcement, the focus of the rite falls on securing the willing consent of the congregation, without which the offender cannot be restored. At its opening, the excommunicate is asked whether he desires to confess and condemn his sin 'in the sight of this church'.¹⁶³ The greater part of the homily then expounds the nature of sin, exhorting the congregation to a merciful attitude to the supplicant. The offender, in his own address to the congregation, not only warns believers to shun his sinful example, but also pleads with them for pardon and restoration. The pastor then asks the congregation, which is gathered round for the purpose:

Men and brethren, do you wish to pardon the guilt of this repentant sinner, by which he has offended this your fellowship, and commend his cause to God the Father by your common prayers, so that God may impart his mercy to him, and be willing to confirm in heaven what we are doing here on earth? [. . .] Do you wish to receive this offender into your fellowship, and henceforth regard him as one of your very dear brethren?¹⁶⁴

The absolution which follows reflects the giving of congregational consent:

Before this church, the government of which has been entrusted to me, I absolve you of the penalty of your transgressions and release you from the bonds of excommunication, by the authority of God, the power of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, with the agreement of all the members of this church here present and also with the assent of the bishop, and I restore you to your former place and full rights in the church.¹⁶⁵

This is close to Martyr's insistence that excommunication and reconciliation involve the judgment of the elders, the consent of the whole church and the authority of Christ. A further point of correspondence with his thought is found in the excommunicate's prescribed prayers for mercy. These match Martyr's position that sin primarily separates from God, and that excommunication is to be understood as

¹⁶³ R, 33, TCR, 476-7: Visne, frater N. in Christo carissime, peccatum coram Deo tuum et in huius Ecclesiae conspectu confiteri detestarique, ut animum intelligamus a pravitate, qua prius tenebaris, abalienatum esse, teque ut rursus ad ecclesiae nostrae societatem aggregemus, a qua prius singulari perversitate tua revulsus eras.

¹⁶⁴ R, 33, TCR, 487.

¹⁶⁵ R, 33, TCR, 489.

an outward indicator of this inward apostasy.¹⁶⁶ The offender's confession to God makes no mention of sins against others: its focus falls entirely on the sinner's offence to God, and the consequent rupturing of communion:

But I, the most terrible and despicable sinner of them all, have turned away from this, your most holy and healthful counsel, and have most grievously offended your most divine majesty by my enormous perversity, and by falling into sin, have infected and polluted to my own very great hurt and danger, that most pure vesture of innocence with which you had clothed me in the sacrament of baptism through Christ our Saviour, until at last in my lost condition I utterly rejected it, and wickedly separated myself from the church, to which I was joined by baptism.¹⁶⁷

The rite's tenor is one of pastoral care for, and solidarity with, the sinner and a yearning for his reconciliation to the church. Though the rubric describes him as 'the offender' (*reus*), he is addressed repeatedly as 'dearest brother' (*carissime frater*), and referred to in the homily as 'our brother'. The liturgy is thus a confession of mutual slavery to sin, vulnerability to temptation, and dependence on divine mercy. It urges each believer to pray for preservation from temptation, and reminds them of the need to offer and seek forgiveness. The excommunicate's humility and confession are to call forth a corresponding attitude on the part of the listening congregation.¹⁶⁸ This attitude to the sinner recalls both Martyr's comments on the salutary character of excommunication for the church as a whole, and his acute consciousness of the corporate solidarity of the church. The sanction is hence a power given for the edification and health of the church, since it not only preserves from pollution but also deters others from sin. But the power is rightly exercised only with mercy and pity, since excommunication of a church member is akin to bodily amputation. As with fraternal correction, the sinner is to be treated not harshly, but gently.

Given these similarities, the case for Martyr's authorship is strong. The liturgical form of the piece is of little help in confirming this: no similar examples of liturgical composition survive from his hand. However, the lengthy sermon with which the *Formula* opens is reminiscent of Martyr's style. Its composition in Latin suggests that the author was not English: apart from Martyr's own exhortation for the communion service, every other element of Cranmer's liturgical reforms was in English from the outset. The sermon's lucid style, lengthy sentences and exhaustive pastoral application are comparable to Martyr's preaching. Characteristic of his

¹⁶⁶ *Cor*, 67r-v.

¹⁶⁷ R, 33, *TCR*, 485.

¹⁶⁸ R, 33, *TCR*, 476-83.

style is the transition he makes from a brief exposition of the character of sin to its application: 'By these things we can easily understand what we ourselves may think about our crimes, as well as about those of others, and what our attitude toward them should be'.¹⁶⁹

The most plausible alternative author is Jan Laski. A contemporary counterpart to the *Formula* exists in Laski's *Forma ac Ratio*, published in 1555 but originating in his time as pastor of the Stranger Church in London. Included in this church order are two congregational disciplinary liturgies, including a form to be used for the re-admission of penitents.¹⁷⁰ As a member of the canon law commission, leader of a church which was already exercising a congregational discipline, and occasional confidant of Cranmer, Laski is an alternative source for the *Reformatio's* rite. However, while there are some suggestive similarities between the *Forma* and the *Formula*, they also diverge in significant details. A couple of examples demonstrate this point. Both rites for the reconciliation of excommunicates open with lengthy admonitions to the congregation; but while the intent of these is similar, their phraseology and biblical references differ. The *Forma ac Ratio*, while it urges the congregation to accept the penitent, places much more emphasis than the *Formula* on reproving and admonishing him; he is also required to offer evidence of repentance. The pastoral gentleness of Martyr's approach is missing, and the *Forma* also lacks the generosity of the *Formula's* attitude to the penitent.

However, though the *Formula's* overall approach is most consistent with Martyr's thought, the case for the influence of the Stranger churches' disciplinary practice is nevertheless strong. In particular, the *Formula's* opening homily bears a close resemblance to the sermon in the separate rite provided by the *Forma* for the public reconciliation of offenders who repent before the sentence of excommunication is passed. A vernacular version of this rite had been published in London in 1552 for the use of the French Stranger church.¹⁷¹ Comparison of one section illustrates the similarity of their rite to the *Formula's* homily:

¹⁶⁹ R, 33, TCR, 478-9: Quibus rebus facile possumus intelligere, etc. Compare Cor, 66^v: Ex Evangelio facile cognoscimus; *ibid*, 67^v, Ex patribus itaque facile colliguntur hi gradus.

¹⁷⁰ Jan Laski, *Forma ac ratio tota ecclesiastici Ministerii, in peregrinorum, potissimum vero Germanorum Ecclesia* in Joannis à Lasco opera tam edita quam inedita, ed. A. Kuyper, 2 vols (Amsterdam, 1886), II, 1-283. This includes both a *Ritus ac forma publicae poenitentiae ante excommunicationem*, 184-94, and a *Ritus recipiendi rursus in Ecclesiam excommunicatos post data manifesta signa verae resipiscentiae*, 208-22.

¹⁷¹ *La forme de la penitence publique*, in *Doctrine de la penitence publique*, (London, 1552), RSTC 16572.7.

*La forme de la
penitence publique*
(1552)

La premiere est, que nous sommes tous enclos soubz peché. La seconde, que nous sommes ainsi enclos soubz peché, affin que derechef par le misericorde gratuite de Dieu en Jesus Christ, nous soyons tous saulvez, tant que cela touche Dieu, et non pas affinque nous perissons en noz pechez.

Forma ac ratio (1555)

Duo nobis igitur de peccato in scripturis prodita habemus. Alterum, nos omnes sub peccatum conclusos esse. Alterum vero, conclusos quidem esse, sed ut omnes etiam per gratuitam Dei in Christo misericordiam, quod ad Deum quidem attinet, servemur, non autem in peccato nostro pereamus, praeterquam si, contempto Dei erga nos in Christo beneficio, nobis ipsi in peccato nostro placeamus, atque ita demum in illo etiam, iusto Dei iudicio, obduremur.

*Formula
reconciliationis*
(Harleian MS 426)

Principio Sacrarum Scripturarum auctoritas duo nos de peccato docet: alterum est quod omnes sine ulla exceptione peccatorem in carcere detrudimur: alterum quod ad hunc finem vincula nostra referentur, non ut semper in illis iaceremus, sed ut ex illis immensa et infinita Dei Patris misericordia propter Christum explicaremur.

Such similarities strongly suggest that common texts circulated in London when these rites were being developed.¹⁷² Nevertheless, the *Formula* is clearly an independent composition. Though the homilies display the use of common material, there are significant differences of style and approach between them. The *Formula's* sermon, for example, includes considerable material additional to that of the Stranger church rite, and is employed in a different liturgical setting. Moreover, the *Formula's* liturgical shape is far from identical to those of the Stranger churches. Significantly, for example, there are marked differences in the forms prescribed to receive the sinner back into fellowship. Unlike the *Formula*, and although in other areas of church life the Stranger churches practised a high degree of congregational participation, in neither *La forme* or the *Forma ac Ratio*, is the congregation's consent to the reconciliation of the sinner sought. Moreover, acceptance of the sinner is expressed not by the *Formula's* public declaration of absolution, with the minister touching the offenders head as a sign of reconciliation, but rather in the course of a prayer. Overall, the pastoral tone of the *Formula* is warmer than the more

¹⁷² *Doctrine de la penitence publique*, un-numbered fol 3F-V; Laski, *Opera*, II, 187; TCR, 478.

forbidding rites of the Stranger churches. Laski is unlikely to be the author of the *Reformatio's* title.

The *Formula* was an unlikely candidate for inclusion in the *Reformatio*. As a liturgical piece, it is out of place in a legal code. Further, it represents a pastoral, local, evangelical interpretation of restoration from excommunication, whereas in the rest of the code the sanction is a judicial process under the control of the courts. It corresponds to Martyr's own thought much more closely than do most of the code's other disciplinary provisions. It clearly owes its place in the *Reformatio* to its availability early in the drafting process: the final burst of preparation which produced the main disciplinary titles had different objectives. If this is the case, it suggests that Martyr's approach to discipline was acceptable to the drafting committee early in 1552, but that by the autumn this came to be rejected in favour of more traditional forms. On this hypothesis, the *Formula* survived, alongside the provisions for parochial discipline in *De divinis officiis*, as a relic of the moment when England's evangelical leadership openly contemplated adopting a discipline on Reformed foundations, as commended by its most distinguished theologian.

Conclusion

In what was to prove the last year of his reign, the adolescent Edward VI began to play a more active role in the government of his realm. A memorandum in his own hand listing matters of business for the Privy Council on 13 October 1552, divides the agenda into temporal and religious affairs. Fifth in the list of ecclesiastical matters the king noted, 'Th'abrogating of th'old canon law, and establishment of a new'.¹⁷³ The project was clearly approaching completion. However, despite the labours of the king's commissioners under Cranmer's industrious supervision, the momentous task was soon to come to naught, apparently sunk by an eruption of mistrust and animosity between the archbishop and Northumberland.

Our examination has disclosed how the *Reformatio* displays the interplay of conservatism and change in the English Reformation. It reveals that the evangelical regime in England, while aspiring to give leadership to the Protestant cause in Europe, saw little need to align the church's polity and legal framework to emerging continental precedents. The necessity of legislating for a territory as extensive as England meant city-state models of reform in any case offered only limited help. Yet this consideration alone is inadequate to account for the conservative approach

¹⁷³ BL MS Lansdowne 1236, fol. 19, printed in Nichols, *Literary Remains*, 543.

of much of the code. The *Reformatio* was a powerful statement of England's emerging ecclesiological identity, the production of a regime confident of its control of the process of reform and determined to complete it. Nevertheless, it displays both an unexpected ambivalence to the direction which reform was taking across the North Sea, and the persistence of a distinctively legal approach to church government, epitomised in its attitude to discipline.

Comparison of the provisions of the *Reformatio* with the thought of Peter Martyr, England's foremost representative of continental Protestant scholarship, has highlighted the distinctive character of its reformation. The doctrinal sections lean towards Reformed theology, but ecclesologically are content with the moderate, circumspect position of the *Articles*. Most conspicuously Protestant are the church order titles. They would have both complemented the introduction of the second *Prayer Book* and strongly reinforced its reorientation of the church's life around pulpit and Bible. They represent the determination of Cranmer and his colleagues to implement evangelical priorities in every diocese and parish, and include tantalising hints of their aspiration to accompany this with a genuinely local church discipline. However, the code's main disciplinary provisions are surprisingly traditional. Reformation principles colour some of them, but the predominant approach is judicial and penal, rather than congregational, presbyteral and reformative. Ecclesiastical discipline in the *Reformatio* is a judicial process, administering a graded series of penalties, rather than an essentially pastoral function.

The principal exception to this is the *Formula*. Its early inclusion, and Martyr's likely authorship, indicates that the code's drafters were sympathetic to a continental solution when they began their work. However, in its final form the *Reformatio* suggests that they drew back from this course. They prepared for England a comprehensive, simplified and accessible corpus of ecclesiastical law. A reformed church order would be constructed within a strikingly traditional legal framework, by royal authority. Discipline was far from ignored. However, the ecclesiastical discipline which was to be integral to its order would be very different from the Christian institution which Martyr held was crucial to the health of the true church.

Chapter Seven

The Unwelcome Bridle

The principal purpose of this study has been to outline Peter Martyr's ecclesiology, with particular attention to church discipline, and to examine aspects of the English Reformation in its light. Yet it also has a contemporary significance. Ecclesiastical history serves the church by maintaining a dialogue with the past which is fruitful for its health. As episodes in the development of doctrine and practice are described, continuities and discontinuities with present ecclesiastical concerns are exposed. The contribution of centuries of theological reflection to today's discourse is identified. The voices of former generations of believers are heard interpreting Scripture as they wrestle with perennial issues. Current debates and preoccupations are thus put in perspective, gaining depth and wisdom. In summarising the argument of this thesis, it is accordingly fitting to outline the present relevance of its central concerns. In particular, Martyr's advocacy of Christian discipline poses the contemporary church some provocative questions: what contribution can his thought make to the resolution of modern dilemmas over the appropriate expression of the mutual accountability of believers?

Our examination of Martyr's ecclesiology has highlighted the high view he held of the church, and his concomitant advocacy of discipline as the instrument by which its members are conformed to the 'divine law'. We have seen how he shared the reformers' conviction, originating with Luther, that the church as a body of believers is called into being by God through his Word. It is not primarily the means of grace, but its object, subject rather than prior to the Word by which it is gathered. We observed, nevertheless, how Martyr's understanding of the church as a company of called believers is subordinate to his theologically pivotal doctrine of communion with Christ. Since through the action of the Holy Spirit believers are united to Christ by faith, the church is the body of which he is head. Believers are members of this body. This organic concept is central, and also dynamic: the church is not yet perfect, but is being conformed to Christ by a process of growth which derives from his headship. Word, sacrament and discipline are the instruments of the Spirit in accomplishing this transformation. In thinking which, like much of Martyr's ecclesiological language, derives from the letter to the Ephesians, they are primarily administered by the permanent human ministries which Christ has given his church. Though the eschatological note is somewhat muted in Martyr's presentation, it is through these

three appointed means that the church is built up and prepared for its destiny as his bride.

Martyr's doctrine of the marks is distinctive. On the one hand, he is characteristic of his generation in displaying a qualified sympathy for Luther's preference for the Word alone as the instrument of divine action. The Word, with the sacraments as 'visible words', remains the primary means of the church's nourishment and growth. However, like Bucer, Martyr held that genuine faith translates into obedient conduct. To maintain this correspondence entails mutual vigilance, and discipline accordingly becomes the third mark. Occasionally assigned a subordinate role, it is nevertheless required by an ecclesiology based on communion. It is not dispensable: the communion existing among church members requires provision for their tendency to stray from the path of obedience. Together with, rather than distinct from, teaching and mutual encouragement, this responsibility is expressed in brotherly correction and, if necessary, the more severe discipline of excommunication.

Martyr's consistent advocacy of discipline as the third mark is one point at which his ecclesiology heralds a lasting divergence of Reformed ecclesiology from Calvin's presentation, if not his practice. In the English context, it is Martyr's thought which lies behind the adoption of a succinct three-mark doctrine in the Elizabethan homily for Whit Sunday, written by his sometime amanuensis, John Jewel. Yet the adoption of the other salient feature of his thought on discipline, the congregational principle, was less widespread. Indeed, his aspirations for the informal exercise of discipline among believers were shared by few apart from Bucer. Though the emerging Reformed tradition generally recognised the disciplinary authority of the whole people, it was normally content to see this being exercised representatively, by either the magistrate or the church's elders. Martyr was unusual in maintaining a separate role for the *plebs Christi*. For him, elders were not representative figures but simply a species of divinely-instituted ministry. While they took the initiative and supervised the disciplinary process, they had the last word neither in excommunication nor in reconciliation, which belonged to the people.

We have also seen that Martyr's ecclesiology is not without either *lacunae* or problematics. Indeed, the diffuse nature of his comments on the church, in works which are either biblical commentaries or polemical treatises, presents obstacles to the production of a consistent synthesis. Though the core of his ecclesiology can in principle be identified with some clarity, its application to the circumstances of his day

reveals some unresolved tensions. We have noted, for example, how his descriptions of the offices of the church vary, depending on the text or issue which lies before him. Further, his conviction of their divine origin does not entail the four-fold enumeration which Calvin was already advocating. The distinction Martyr at one point suggests between prophetic and diaconal offices is not consistently followed and his understanding of the presbyteral office in any case straddles it. Further, he rarely makes obvious the connection between the Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12 offices and his assumptions on episcopacy. Though Martyr clearly belongs to the stream of interpretation in which Bucer and Calvin also stand, he steers his own course.

This flexibility over matters of church government was not unique. Presbyterian orthodoxy was a later development, and Martyr was typical rather than unusual in his generation in combining recognition of a two-fold presbyterate with acceptance of the validity of inherited patterns of ministry. Thus, Martin Bucer commended a modified, synodical yet episcopal government of the church in his prescription for England, very different from the orders he had constructed in Strasbourg or, apart from Cologne, elsewhere. On the other hand, Martyr's unqualified acquiescence in episcopacy as the normal, divinely sanctioned basis for church government does mark his thought as unusually traditional.

In this perspective, his predilection for the Aristotelian model as an explanatory schema is a symptom of his reluctance to reconcile the patterns of government he observed in Scripture with the medieval inheritance. The monarchical-aristocratic-democratic divisions provided conveniently broad categories. They facilitated rejection of papal pretensions, were assimilable to the polity of Old Testament Israel, and accommodated both the presbyteral and episcopal principles which Martyr observed in both Scripture and history. They allowed for the participation of the whole people at critical points, congruent with his understanding of the keys. As part of the common currency of sixteenth-century political discourse, they also provided an accessible and recognisable alternative conceptualisation of ecclesiastical authority to that of the old church, which was valuable for Martyr's polemical purposes. The model thus provided a conveniently accommodating framework, but also obscured rather than facilitated the elucidation of a coherent synthesis.

A further tension in Martyr's thought arises in the relationship he envisages between church and state. The role he envisaged for the magistrate, in principle custodial, was not without ambiguity. As with most reformers of his generation, he exposed the

church to the charge that it was dependent on the temporal power. The relationship he portrayed was asymmetrical. The church exists by the Word and Spirit of God; its power is spiritual; excommunication is its *supremus gladius*. Yet it cannot exist in the world without an order which is guaranteed by the temporal sword. The improper exercise of ecclesiastical power can be checked by the magistrate. Though theoretically distinct, the church is therefore dependent for its good order on magisterial goodwill. However, the exercise of temporal power has no constraint beyond the will of the prince, since the magistrate holds his authority directly from God. The church thus depends on the magistrate, but the reverse is not the case.

The English Reformation revealed this vulnerability of the church to the whim of the magistrate, exposing tensions to which Martyr's ecclesiology provided answers as incomplete as those of most of his contemporaries. Church and state, with Cranmer's encouragement, were effectively fused, and the different roles prescribed by Martyr largely ignored. The Hooper crisis exemplified this. A ceremonial 'matter indifferent', over which for him the church had a separate legislative competence, was prescribed in England by statute, and enforced by the privy council, with civil imprisonment as the sanction for non-compliance. The submission which Martyr urged on Hooper was to an order in which his own distinctions between civil and ecclesiastical power were ignored. A further example is provided by the *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*. Though churchmen dominated the drafting process, the code was prepared as a royal proclamation. It would not be parliamentary statute, but neither would it constitute ecclesiastical law on Martyr's later definition. Rather, this was royal law, and to transgress it would be to defy Tudor sovereignty rather than the consensus of the church. If the circumstances of the supremacy accounted for the direction taken by the *Reformatio*, it nevertheless represented a striking departure from the ecclesiastical autonomy perhaps rather idealistically envisaged by Martyr. His advocacy of a strong magisterial role thus proved compatible with the emergence of a church polity later to be labelled as Erastian. Ecclesiastical legislative and disciplinary autonomy, in principle important to Martyr, proved in practice a casualty of his political theory.

The English settlement also illustrates a related unresolved issue, namely the tension between the reformers' vision of a *corpus christianum* and their widely-shared commitment to the church as the *coetus credentium*. As Bucer had discovered in Strasbourg, the tension was most evident over the implementation of discipline. Martyr's aspirations for discipline called for its voluntary practice among believers, and embodied an 'ascending' notion of authority in its public exercise. However, his view of

the relationship of church and state entailed magisterial supervision of ministers in the discharge of their office in the mixed congregations which constituted the territorial church. As we have seen, he did not shrink from ascribing England's 1549 'stirs' to the failure of both minister and magistrate to exercise discipline, with an implied 'descending' assumption of authority. The identification of the church, for the purposes of ecclesiastical order, as coterminous with the territorial polity thus introduced ambiguity, particularly over the nature of discipline.

This in turn suggests a distinction among the marks of the church which Martyr was slow to recognise. Since faith and hypocrisy are visibly indistinguishable, the presence of believers and hence of the church is known by the means by which faith is created and sustained, namely Word and sacrament. Yet discipline is concerned with the correlation of faith and visible conduct. Whereas Word and sacrament are concerned with drawing out faith, discipline deals with its fruit. It is therefore properly exercised only among genuine believers. Yet in most Protestant states it was conceived not as a voluntary expression of mutual responsibility, as described in Matthew 18 and attempted in the Strasbourg *Christlichen Gemeinschaften*. Rather, it was exercised by public authority over all who profess Christian belief. Since in sixteenth-century Europe such profession was normally seen as an obligation of citizenship, church discipline inevitably became a public function, closely associated with the juridical institutions of the territorial church, and too easily associated with the maintenance of civil order. It therefore inevitably remained more ambiguous than Word and sacrament as a reliable indicator of the presence of the true church.

England exemplified this development. The *Reformatio* itself displays an unresolved tension between an evangelical approach, along lines similar to Martyr's, and the desire to retain traditional, episcopally-governed ecclesiastical discipline, exercised over every subject of the king through a church court system operated on traditional *ius commune* principles. Though the original, restorative intent was not ignored, little attempt was made to integrate the inherited pattern with the tentative and incomplete provision for parochial discipline in the hands of minister and elders. Further, though the liturgy of reconciliation embodies Martyr's principle of congregational consent, the *Reformatio* keeps the imposition and lifting of sentence firmly under episcopal control.

As chapters five and six have demonstrated, such ambiguity was characteristic of the ecclesiology of the Edwardian Reformation. There is little evidence to suggest that its instruments of reform represent a significant advance on the ecclesiological convictions

displayed by Cranmer in the early 1540s. The definitions of the church in the *Forty-Two Articles* and *Reformatio* were, by the Reformed standards of their day, modest and incomplete. The organic, universal church as the body of Christ which dominates Martyr's conception is strikingly absent. A modified version of the Lutheran *Augsburg Confession's* two-mark description of the visible church sufficed, in the *Forty-Two Articles*, to define England's ecclesiological identity, and there was no attempt to modify the inherited ministerial order and system of ecclesiastical courts. It was through the new patterns of ministry required by the *Prayer Book* and *Reformatio* that evangelical doctrine and practice would be promulgated, rather than root and branch structural reform. The principal jurisdictional change was the replacement of papal authority with the royal supremacy, under which ecclesiastical government became a function of Tudor sovereignty. Reformed thought on the power of the keys and the consequent exercise of authority within the church, typified by Martyr's emphasis on the role of the congregation in major decisions, found little sympathy in the official instruments of reform. Ecclesiastical power in England continued to be administered on a 'descending' understanding of authority.

To portray the Edwardian Reformation as a determined attempt to endow England with a church polity recognisable to later generations as indubitably Reformed would therefore be mistaken. Cranmer's recruitment of Bucer, Martyr and others indicates his preference for Swiss and South German versions of Protestantism. Both his correspondence with Bullinger and Calvin, and the 1552 *Prayer Book* confirm this theological allegiance. However, his programme of change and response to crises reveal a reluctance to abandon inherited patterns of church government and discipline and to adopt wholeheartedly the ecclesiology of this emerging school. Martyr's work in England reveals that over questions of church order, it was still a flexible tradition. But the record of his correspondence, and comparison of his ecclesiology with the formal reform of the church, also disclose the regime's reluctance wholeheartedly to follow its trajectory.

If Martyr made no startling contribution to Protestant ecclesiology, his exposition of it, standing in the affinity which would crystallise into an identifiably Reformed tradition, did not lack distinctive emphases. Indeed, the scale of the posthumous reception of his works, particularly as summarised in the *Loci Communes*, which would be a fruitful subject for further study, suggests his thought had a significant impact on its development. However, our comparison of his views with the Edwardian Reformation has highlighted the diversity, rather than the convergence, of Protestant ecclesiology in

mid-century. England's scale and distinct political history meant that the implementation of religious change would necessarily differ from other Protestant polities. Yet structural issues alone do not account for the pronounced strain of ecclesiological conservatism displayed in its instruments of reform, including the rejected *Reformatio*. Despite the regime's dependence on continental scholars, change did not march to their drum beat. One root of the longstanding tension between England's religious settlement and continental Calvinism, to be experienced so acutely in Elizabeth's reign, was the earlier reluctance of her brother's government to adopt the vision of the church represented by Peter Martyr Vermigli.¹

The reluctance which the continental reformers encountered in implementing Christian discipline has a modern resonance. Their determination to restore discipline to a vital role in the church contrasts sharply with the contemporary *Zeitgeist*. A recent Church of England report on clergy tribunals commented on this: 'We live in a society where, increasingly, morality is being privatised and the individual is all-important. All forms of authority are treated with suspicion and the exercise of discipline is unpopular'.² As this suggests, discipline is widely associated with the exercise of hierarchical, 'descending' power, considered inappropriate by many in the church as well as society. However, the notion that Christian discipleship includes a moral accountability to fellow church members is also rarely encountered. Indeed, the scarcity of recent treatments of church discipline, at least in the British Isles, reveals the widespread avoidance of a subject which in the sixteenth century generated so much attention.³

Church practice confirms this impression of neglect. Within the Church of England, for example, it is normally assumed that discipline relates exclusively to the conduct and doctrine of the clergy. Formally, a measure of eucharistic discipline continues to apply

¹ Not least, one might add, on account of the conclusions drawn from continental Protestant practice by the Marian exiles, among whom Martyr continued to be influential. See Pettegree (1996), esp. 118-28.

² *Under Authority: The Report of the General Synod Working Party reviewing Clergy Discipline and the working of the Ecclesiastical Courts* (London: Church House, 1996), vi.

³ Moreover, most recent publications are either relatively brief in their compass, or written for a popular readership: John White and Ken Blue, *Healing the Wounded: the costly love of church discipline* (Leicester: Inter Varsity, 1985); Church of England Evangelical Council, *Truth, error and discipline in the church* (London: Vine Books, 1978); Geoffrey Locke, 'Whatever happened to church discipline?', *Latimer Comment* 51 (Oxford: Latimer House, 1994); Daniel E. Wray, *Biblical Church Discipline* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1978); Alan Sell, *Guidelines on Church Discipline* (London: United Reformed Church, 1983); G.R. Evans, *Discipline and Justice in the Church of England* (Leicester: Gracewing, 1998); R.H. Helmholz, 'Discipline of the Clergy: Medieval and Modern', *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* 30 (2002), 189-98.

to all. Ministers may canonically refuse the sacrament to anyone guilty of 'malicious and open contention with his neighbours, or other grave and open sin without repentance'. Such exclusion is normally to be imposed only with specific episcopal approval.⁴ Beyond this limited provision for eucharistic purity, the institution provides no further disciplinary mechanism. Those who are not in clerical orders cannot be tried in church courts for offences against ecclesiastical law. Nor is there a common procedure for addressing moral failure within the congregation. Indeed, when the notion of lay discipline received official attention in the mid-twentieth century, the phrase was interpreted to refer to the minimum obligations of church membership rather than the submission of moral conduct to the judgment of fellow believers.⁵

A recognised system of ecclesiastical discipline is thus normally thought necessary only for church officers, generally ordained ministers. In principle, the Anglican regime remains strict. In the Church of England, canonical obedience is a legal obligation. Juridically, clergy are subject in the performance of their office and their conduct to their ecclesiastical superiors. Nor is this notional. In the late 1990s, considerable effort was devoted to altering the operation of the ecclesiastical courts in order to improve the administration of clergy discipline within the canonical framework. Nevertheless, the purpose of discipline was narrowly defined. In the official report proposing change, the focus fell mainly on the need for better procedures to resolve serious disputes and deal with allegations of misconduct. Though this legitimately claims connection with Matthew 18, the breadth of the reformers' aspirations, and the restorative function of discipline, are largely absent. Clerical discipline primarily relates to the higher standard of performance of Christian ethical standards expected of ministers by comparison with other members of the *laos*, as well as to their doctrinal orthodoxy.⁶ It therefore is concerned primarily with suitability for the continued holding of office, rather than with a defendant's spiritual condition.

However, despite these limits and the relatively rare use of formal clerical discipline, its public exercise does not enjoy strong support. A recent case in the Church of Ireland illustrates the point. In March 2002 the Bishop of Meath and Kildare initiated the

⁴ 'Of notorious offenders not to be admitted to Holy Communion', Canon B. 16, *The Canons of the Church of England* (5th edn., London: Church House, 1993), 33.

⁵ *Report of the Committee on the Spiritual Discipline of the Laity*, Church Assembly Paper 836 (London: Church House, 1947); *Report of the Joint Committee on the Discipline of the Laity*, Convocation of York Paper 504, *York Journal of Convocation*, January 1952 (York: W.H. Smith, 1952), xxxvii-xxxvi.

⁶ *Under Authority*, 17-19.

official disciplinary procedure to determine whether the Christology publicly and consistently taught by the Dean of Clonmacnoise was consistent with the church's doctrine. Taken after the failure of informal attempts at conciliation, the inauguration of the formal process triggered a considerable alarm in both Ireland and England over the legitimacy of exercising discipline over the clergy in their teaching office. Far from reflecting a recognition that, whatever the details of the individual case, a recognisable doctrinal identity entails maintaining some limits to comprehensiveness, the case has highlighted the widespread antipathy to clergy discipline in the Anglican communion.⁷ The understandable reluctance to invoke formal disciplinary procedures exacerbates the dilemma, making its occasional employment appear bizarre and disproportionate.

The contrast with the reformers' vision of Christian discipline is striking. Although discipline's bridle was accepted with varying degrees of enthusiasm in practice, there was a general acceptance that it was vital to the church. Today, notwithstanding the emergence of new structures of congregational life emphasising mutual care, such collective responsibility for doctrinal and moral probity is rarely cited as a priority. The notion that the obligation of believers to translate faith into loving obedience entails a mutual accountability and hence submission to the church's discipline is scarcely widespread.⁸ The sixteenth century thus raises unsettling questions for the contemporary church. If the hierarchical nature of their society, and the medieval inheritance, coloured the reformers' approach, it is at least incumbent on today's church to enquire into its own vulnerability to societal convention.

If the recovery of discipline is considered desirable, what might Peter Martyr contribute? His approach has potential in a number of directions, particularly arising from his portrayal of discipline as a responsibility of the whole church. First, his emphasis on discipline as a dimension of Christian discipleship is a corrective to the juridical conceptions which inevitably prevail in church law and process as well as media comment. Restoration of his notion that one aspect of believers' responsibility to serve one another is charitable admonition and correction would not only situate public controversies in a wider ecclesial perspective. It also reconnects discipline with the dynamic process of the church's growth to maturity portrayed in Ephesians 4, and with the co-operative effort which this involves. Church discipline could be reconceived as the duty of every believer, exercised both informally and when necessary formally

⁷ 'Heresy Court may try Dean', *Church Times*, 22 Mar 2002, 4; 'Furlong Case: just ask Ratzinger', *ibid*, 29 Mar 2002, 9; B. Bowder 'Ireland's heresy trial adjourned'; *ibid*, 12 April 2002, 4; 'On trial in Ireland - Dean Furlong or the Church?', *ibid*, 19 April 2002, 11.

⁸ Torrance (1956), 82-7

within the local community, rather than being primarily associated with relatively remote and occasional tribunals concerning clergy, lawyers, and ecclesiastical officials.

A related advantage of Martyr's approach for the present situation, freed from the complications which his doctrine of church-state relations introduced, is his emphasis on the place of congregational authority over discipline's ultimate sanctions. In an era when suspicion of ecclesiastical hierarchies is widespread, this has an obvious appeal. As Martyr recognised, no disciplinary system in anything but the smallest group can avoid delegation of some functions to authorised officers, but his reservation of the final word in both excommunication and absolution to the congregation itself is both consistent with the New Testament and different to most current church practice. To ask congregations to shoulder this task would be, in his understanding, to call them to their full ecclesial responsibility. Further, it is not, in principle, incompatible with achieving a consistent approach within a denomination or with government on an episcopal model. The suggestion that a local congregation should not shrink from exercising excommunication as a means of inducing a change of heart is radical. Yet it is worth asking whether abstention from such steps does not also impoverish the church, since the public restoration of repentant offenders provides opportunity for a uniquely powerful celebration of mutual dependence on grace.

The disciplinary impasse at which the historic denominations have arrived is uncomfortable. Biblical warrant, not least from Matthew 18.15-18, is claimed for the exercise of clerical discipline, yet both the restorative intent and universal application of the dominical command are marginalised. Martyr's advocacy of a 'democratic' disciplinary practice offers the contemporary church the opportunity to break the impasse and to re-imagine its common life. The recovery of biblical discipline might yet, with his insight, be seen as a welcome contribution to the church's health.

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